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A METHOD OF PRAYER

[*Moien Court et très
facile de faire Oraison*]

BY / / / /
MADAME GUYON.

A Revised Translation, with Notes,
Edited by
DUGALD MACFADYEN, M.A.

LONDON:
JAMES CLARKE AND CO., 13 AND 14, FLEET STREET.

LEEK:
W. H. EATON, THE MOORLANDS PRESS.

MDCCCII.

JEANNE MARIE BOUVIÈRES
DE LA MOTHE GUYON.

Born 13th April, 1648.

Died 9th June, 1717.

"I was scarce able to contain the fire which burned in my soul, which had all the fervour of what men call love, but nothing of its impetuosity; for the more ardent the more peaceful it was, . . . nothing passed in my head, but much in the innermost of my soul.

I knew not what to say, having never read or heard of such a state as I experienced; for before this I had known nothing of the operations of God in souls,"
—Autobiography of Madame Guyon, Pt. I,
Chap. XII.

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ERRATA.

Preface : Madam for Madame.

p. 36 (note) : increase for increases.

p. 81, line 8 : look for looketh,

p. 120, line 8 : pessession for possession.

p. 165 : Fénélon for Fénelon, also pp.

194, 200, etc.

*EDITOR'S
PREFACE.*

IN every generation there are a certain number of predestined readers of this treatise of Madam Guyon's,—happy the generation which has many such! The object of a new edition is therefore only to give the book another chance of finding its proper readers, and the readers of finding the book. To those who are waiting for it, it will be found charged with the essential magnetism of authentic spiritual experience; and they will be thankful as long as they live that it came in their way. It is for them that Madam Guyon writes, and she knows that, except to them, her words will be

"A blank a hollow sound!"

"The language of love is barbarous to him

who loves not, but it is very natural to him who loves;"* and this is most true of the converse of the soul when it is deep in the fellowship of God's love.

The translator's problem in dealing with Madam Guyon's writings is to preserve as far as possible the singular union of an almost colloquial simplicity and an essential fitness and dignity, which meet in her style. It is an amazing endeavour, and still more wonderful achievement, to write familiarly about the most august heights of the Christian faith—not as matters of faith but of personal experience—and to do it in a way that should appeal to the wayfarer yet at the beginning of his journey. As a literary performance this achievement puts Madam Guyon in the same class with Bunyan and Thomas à Kempis.

In order to give something of the impression of the original, the following plan

* See chap. xxiii.

has been adopted in the present edition. The translation issued in 1772, but probably made some years earlier, by a member of the Society of Friends in Bristol,* has been used as a basis; and the quaint turns of phrase of the current eighteenth century speech preserved. In the particular quality which might be described as familiar dignity, the best English of that period was richer than it has been at any time since. It had not yet become Johnsonian, and it had ceased to be archaic; it has all the marks of perfect breeding. The contrast between the force of this early translation and one made in the middle of the nineteenth century is very great, and in no respect to the advantage of the latter.

But the translation of 1772 could not be

Printed by W. Pine, for T. Mills, Bookseller, in Wine St. There is some evidence to suggest that for some time before this date a translation had been in circulation among the Friends. T. Mills was the maternal grandfather of Lord Macaulay.

simply reproduced; sometimes it is a paraphrase which does not translate the original; there are many omissions due to the strong Protestant sympathies of the translator; and in some cases careful comparison with similar passages by other teachers of Madam Guyon's affinity shows that her meaning has been inadequately represented.

The present version has been compared, sentence by sentence, with the original printed by Jean de la Pierre at Cologne in 1720, and an endeavour made to bring the translation closer to the meaning of the original. The reader may learn what Madam Guyon wrote, whatever his ecclesiastical sympathies may be. The short abstracts given at the head of each chapter in the French editions have been re-inserted, and the long chapters at the end disentangled from the amorphous condition in which they appeared in 1772.

In quoting from the Bible Madam Guyon laboured under a double disadvantage. She

knew the sacred text only through the Vulgate and a French translation, two slightly coloured and distorting mediums of vision. Sometimes her comments on a passage are appropriate to the version she had before her, but quite inapposite to the version we now use. In such cases it has seemed best to preserve her quotations as she made them, and to add the English Revised Version in the notes, for purposes of comparison.

Some account of the extraordinary vitality and effectiveness of this little book will be found in the notes at the end. That it is still eagerly bought and read, the present editor has good reason to know. For several years he watched catalogues, hunted on old bookstalls, and wrote to booksellers in order to secure the English and French copies used in this edition. Repeatedly when a copy was "scented" it was found to have been sold before it could be "run to earth."

That the message of Madam Guyon has

a work to do still, in spite of the distractions and disquiet of what is called modern religious life—perhaps because of these,—the present Editor is fully persuaded. In the hope that the Spirit which wrought so effectually in the writer, may resume His work in the readers of her book, it is now sent out again on its mission,

Cor ad cor loquitur.

DUGALD MACFADYEN.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

Wherein she sets forth the occasion of this work, its end and ease of the accomplishment thereof, the frame of mind she requires in her readers, and the dedication which she makes of this book to Jesus Christ.

THIS little treatise, conceived in great simplicity, was not originally intended for publication; it was written for a few individuals who were desirous to love God with their whole heart;* some of whom, because of the

* *The Method of Prayer is throughout relative to the mystic doctrine of pure love, that is the complete satisfaction of the soul in God*

profit they received in reading the manuscript, wished to obtain copies of it; and, on this account alone, it was committed to the press.

It still remains in its original simplicity, without any censure on the various leadings of others by the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, and we submit the whole to the judgment of those who are skilled and experienced in divine matters; requesting them, however, not to be stopped by externals, but to penetrate into the main design

•
for Himself, and not for what He gives. "Those who love God only out of regard to happiness love Him just as a miser loves his gold, a voluptuous man his pleasures. Such love, if it be called love, is unworthy of God. Pure love is not inconsistent with mixed love, but a mixed love carried to its true result. When this result is attained the motive of God's glory so expands itself and fills the mind that the other motive, our own happiness, becomes so small and so recedes from our inward notice as to be practically annihilated, as the 'stars disappear when the sun shines.'" Fénelon's "Maxims of the Saints."

of the author, which is to persuade everyone to the love of God, and to serve Him more happily and effectually,* in a manner simple and easy, adapted for those who are unqualified for learned and deep researches and not capable of matters of high theology, but who wish above all to be truly devoted to God. We plead with those who read the book to do so without prejudice; so they will discover under expressions quite ordinary a secret unction, which will excite them to seek after that Good which all should wish to possess. We use the word "ease" of the attainment of perfection, saying that the way to perfection is easy, because God is, indeed, found with ease when we seek Him within ourselves. But, in contradiction to this, some perhaps may urge that passage in John, "*Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me.*"† This apparent difficulty, however, is removed by another passage where He Who cannot

James i, 24, 25.

† John vii, 34.

contradict Himself has said to all, "*Seek and ye shall find.*"* It is true indeed, that he who would seek God and is yet unwilling to forsake his sin, shall not find Him, because he seeks where He is not; and therefore it is added "*Ye shall die in your sin.*"† On the other hand, he who diligently seeks God in his heart, and forsakes his sin that he may draw near unto Him sincerely, shall surely find Him. Many people look upon a life of devotion as so formidable, and the spirit of prayer of such difficult attainment, that they are discouraged from taking a single step toward it. But as the difficulty which is made of a matter brings despair of ever succeeding in it, and also takes away any inclination to undertake it; and, as on the other hand, when one proposes something to oneself as beneficial and easy to obtain, one devotes oneself to it with pleasure, and follows it up bravely; therefore it is

* *Matt. vii, 7.*

† *John viii, 24.*

that I felt bound to show the merit and ease of this way of prayer. We have therefore endeavoured to show the ease of the method proposed in this treatise, the great advantages to be derived from it, and the certainty of their attainment by those that faithfully persevere. Oh, were we once truly sensible of the goodness of God towards His poor creatures, and of His infinite desire to communicate Himself unto them, we should not make for ourselves monsters of the mind; nor despair of obtaining that good which He is so earnest to bestow. "*He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things*"? * Surely so! It is nothing but earnestness and perseverance we want; we have them so much in the little affairs of this life, but lack them in "*the one thing needful*." †

If any find it hard to believe that God

* *Rom. viii, 32.*

† *Luke x, 42.*

is easily to be found in this way, let them not on my testimony alter their opinion, but rather put the method to the test; and their own experience will convince them that the reality far exceeds all my representations of it.

Beloved reader, read this little work with a humble and sincere temper and a childlike spirit, and not with an inclination to cavil and criticise; and you will see that you will reap some good from it. It was written with a hearty desire to bring you unreservedly to God. Receive it, then, in the spirit in which it is given; for nothing more is intended by it than to invite the simple and the childlike to approach their Father, Who delights in the humble confidence of His children and is grieved at the smallest instance of their distrust. Seek nothing but the love of God, and desire your own salvation and you shall surely find it, following this method.

Without setting up our opinion above

the opinion of others, we set forth sincerely the experience we have had, both in our own case and in that of others, of the advantages which follow this simple and natural method of coming to God.

As this treatise was intended only to instruct in prayer, there are many things which we respect and esteem totally omitted, as not concerned with our main subject. It is, however, certain that nothing will be found herein to offend, provided it be read in the spirit with which it was written; and it is still more certain that those who in right earnest make trial of the way, will add their testimony to its truth.

It is Thou alone, O holy Child Jesus, Who lovest simplicity and innocence, "*and Whose delight is to dwell with the children of men,*"* with those who are indeed willing to become "*little children,*"† it is Thou alone Who canst give

* *Prov. viii, 3.*

† *Matt. xviii, 3.*

success and true worth to this little book! Imprint it then on the hearts of all who read it, and lead them to seek Thee within themselves, where Thou reposest as in the cradle, waiting to receive tokens of their love, and to give them testimonies of Thine! They deprive themselves of these good things by their own fault and negligence. It is Thy work O God-Child! O Love uncreate! O Thou silent Word! 'Tis Thy work to make Thyself to be beloved, tasted and heard. Thou canst do it; and I dare to say that Thou wilt, even by this little work, which is wholly unto Thee, and from Thee, and through Thee.

"To Thee be all the Glory."

CHAPTER I.

Introduction. How all are called to prayer, and may by help of ordinary grace offer prayer in the heart, which is the chief means of salvation, and can be done at all times and even by the most simple.

ALL men are capable of prayer; and therefore 'tis a dreadful misfortune that as a general thing almost all persons do imagine that they are not called to prayer. But we are all called to prayer, like as we are all called to salvation.

Prayer is no other thing but the application of the heart to God, and the inward exercise of love. St Paul enjoins us to

2 *A Method of Prayer.*

pray without ceasing. And our Lord saith I say unto you all, watch and pray.† All then may pray, and all ought to pray. But I allow all cannot meditate, and that but very few are fitted for it. So it is not the prayer of meditation which God requires, nor which we desire of you, My dearest brethren, whosoever you be that would be saved, Come ye therefore every one to pray! ye ought to live by prayer, as ye ought to live by love. I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich.‡ It is most easy for you to obtain it, yea, more so than you can imagine. Come all ye that are athirst unto these living waters,§ and don't mock yourselves hewing out broken cisterns that hold no water.|| Come all ye hungry hearts, which find not anything that can content you, and you shall be fully satisfied!*

* *1 Thess. v, 17.*

† *Mark xiii, 33, 37.*

‡ *Rev. iii, 18.*

§ *John vii, 37, 38 summarised.*

|| *Jer. ii, 13.*

Come ye poor afflicted ones, ye who are oppressed with trouble and sorrows, and ye shall be comforted! Come ye that are sick to your Physician, and fear not to approach Him because you are weighed down with maladies; lay open to Him all your diseases, and ye shall be relieved! Come ye children to your Father, and He will receive you with the arm of love! Come ye poor wandering and straggling sheep, draw nigh to your Shepherd! Come ye sinners near to your Saviour! Come ye dull and ignorant ones, ye are all fit for prayer, even ye who think yourselves incapable thereof are most of all fitted for it! Come all of you without exception, Jesus Christ calleth you all! Yet let not those who are without an heart come, for they only are dispens'd from coming; for there must be an heart to love. But who is without an heart? O come then and give this heart unto God; and learn the manner of doing it. All who are willing to pray can easily

do it with the assistance of the ordinary graces, and of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are common to all Christians.

Prayer is the key of perfectness* and of supreme well-being. It is the effectual means of delivering us from all vices, and of acquiring all virtues; for the great means of becoming perfect, is to walk in the presence of God. This He said Himself, *Walk in My presence, and be perfect.*† 'Tis prayer alone that can give you this presence, and that can give it you continually.

Therefore you must learn a kind of prayer which can be made at all times, which does not divert from outward business, and which princes, kings, prelates, priests, magistrates, soldiers, children, artisans, labourers, women and sick persons, may all perform. This is not the prayer of the head, but the prayer of the heart,

* *In the sense of completeness, or consummation of life.* † *Gen. xvii, 1.*

It is not a prayer of thought only, because the spirit of man is so bounded that while he thinks on one thing he cannot think on another; but it is the prayer of the heart, which is not at all interrupted by all the occupations of the mind; nothing but irregular affections can interrupt the prayer of the heart; and 'tis almost impossible for the soul which has once tasted God and the sweetness of His love, to relish anything else but Him.

There is nothing more easy than to have God, and to taste (or delight in) Him. He is more in us than we ourselves. He desires more to give Himself to us, than we do to possess Him. All consists in the right manner of seeking Him, which yet is so easy and so natural, that the very air which we breathe is not more so. And even you who think yourselves so dull, as that you are not good for anything, you (I say) may live by prayer, and upon God Himself, as easily and as continually as you live by

the air which you breathe. Shall ye not then be highly criminal if ye do not do it? But doubtless ye will do it when ye shall have learned the way, which is indeed the easiest that can be,

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CHAPTER II.

1. The first stage of Prayer, practised in two ways, one by meditative reading, the other by simple meditation.

2, 3. Some excellent methods and rules for meditation and ways of exercising it;

4. And of surmounting its difficulties.

THERE are two ways of introducing souls into prayer, which they may and ought to use, for a certain time. One is, *Meditation*; and the other is, *Meditation upon Reading*.

Meditation upon Reading is nothing else but to take some weighty truths which afford matter both for speculation

and practice, but especially for the latter, and to proceed in this manner. First, you shall take the truth, such as you are pleased to choose, and read two or three lines of it in order that you may taste and digest them, endeavouring to draw out the juice or substance of them; and keep fixed to the place which you read, so long as you find any relish in it, not passing further till that place become insipid unto you.

Then you must take as much more, and do just the same, not reading above half a page at a time; for it is not so much the quantity of reading that is profitable, as the manner of reading. Hence those who run apace cannot improve by what they read, any more than the bees can draw out the juice of the flowers by flying over them without resting upon them. To read much, serves more for school-learning than for spiritual know-

⁺ *Mystic: see notes.*

ledge; but to profit really by spiritual books, they must be read in the manner above expressed; and I am sure that, if any should do so, they would by reading gradually accustom themselves to prayer, and become very much disposed for it.

The other help to prayer is *Meditation*, which is performed in a season set apart for it, and not in the time of reading. I think it might be good to enter upon it in this manner. After having placed yourself in the presence of God, by an act of loving faith, you must read something that is substantial, and stop gently upon it; not that you may reason, but only to fix your mind; remembering that the principal exercise ought to be the (practice of the) presence of God, and that the subject should serve more to stay your mind than to employ your reason. A firm belief of God being present in the ground* of our hearts, must needs engage

* "*The ground or centre of the soul is so high and glorious a thing that it cannot properly*

us to sink down into ourselves, gathering all the thoughts inward, and hindering them from being scattered abroad; which is a powerful means of ridding us from a multitude of distractions, and of removing us far from outward objects, that we may approach unto God, Who cannot be found but in the inward ground of ourselves and in our centre, which is the Holy of Holies, where He dwells. Yea, He promises that *if any man do His will, He will come unto him and make His abode in him.** St. Austin accuses himself for the time which he had lost, in not

be named, even as no adequate name can be found for the Infinite and Almighty God. In this ground lies the image of the Holy Trinity. . . . God pours Himself out into our spirit as the sun rays forth its natural light into the air, and fills it with sunshine, so that no eye can tell the difference between the sunshine and the air; how far less this Divine union of the created and the uncreated spirit." Tauler: in Overton's Law, Nonjuror and Mystic p. 152.

* S. John, xiv, 21, 23.

having at first sought God after this manner.

When therefore any one is thus sunk and introverted into himself, and thoroughly penetrated with a living sense of the Divine presence in his inward ground; when the thoughts are all gathered up and retired from the circumference to the centre; which indeed is somewhat painful in the beginning, but afterwards becomes most easy, as I shall show you hereafter; when, I say, the soul is thus recollected into itself, and when it is employed sweetly and gently about the truth it hath read, not in reasoning much upon it, but in savouring and tasting it, and in exciting the will by affection, rather than in applying the understanding by consideration—the affection, being thus stirred up, we must leave it to rest sweetly and in peace, that it may swallow down what it has tasted.

For suppose one should but chew an excellent bit, and indeed relish it, yet if

he did not forbear a little this motion, so as to swallow it down, he could not be nourished by it. So in like manner, when the affection is moved, if we would go on to move it still, we should extinguish its fire, and thereby deprive the soul of its food; and therefore it must necessarily swallow down what it hath chewed and tasted, by a little repose full of respect and confidence. This method is most necessary, and would advance a soul more in a little while, than any other is capable of doing in several years.

But as I have hinted, the principal exercise ought always to be to get in sight of the Divine Presence; this also we ought to perform in the most faithful manner we can; and to call in our senses whensoever they begin to wander. This is a short and effectual way to combat all distractions, because if any would oppose them directly, they but irritate and increase them, whereas by sinking into oneself in the sight of

God, present to faith, and simply recollecting ourselves, we combat them indirectly, and without thinking of them, though in a most powerful manner.

I likewise admonish all beginners not to run from one truth to another, or from one subject to another; but to hold by one and the same so long as they find any relish in it. This is the way quickly to enter and penetrate into the truths, to taste them, and to have them impressed upon us.

I said, 'tis difficult in the beginning for one to recollect himself, because of the habit that the soul has gotten to dwell wholly in externals; but when 'tis a little accustomed to recollection by the violence which it has done to itself, this becomes mighty easy to it; not only because it acquires this habit, but also because God, Who seeks to communicate Himself to His creature, sends it such abundant graces and such an experimental taste of His presence, as render the habit most easy and delightful.

CHAPTER III.

1. A method of Meditative Prayer for those who cannot read;

2, 3, Applied to the Lord's Prayer and to some of God's relations to us,

4. Transition from the first stage of Prayer to the second.

THOSE who cannot read are not thereby deprived of (the benefit of) prayer. Jesus Christ is the great book written without and within, which will teach them all things.

They ought to take this method: first, they must learn this fundamental truth, that *the kingdom of God is within them*;^{*} and that there it must be sought.

^{*} *Luke xvii, 21.*

They who have the care of souls ought to teach their people to pray, even as they teach them the catechism. They teach them the end for which they were created, but they do not sufficiently instruct them how to come to the enjoyment of this end. I could wish they would teach it them in this manner; namely, that they ought to begin by a profound act of adoration, and of self-abasement before God, and therewith shutting their bodily eyes, endeavour to open those of the soul; then they are to gather it wholly inward, and to exercise themselves directly with the presence of God, by a lively faith that God is in us; not suffering their thoughts and natural inclinations* to wander abroad,

Puissances. Madame Guyon recognises a distinction like that between the ψυχή and the πνεῦμα in Greek. The powers of the ψυχή, or natural sensibilities, she calls puissances: these she distinguishes as on a lower plane than the will (volonté) and understanding (entendement); the puissances are meant to be subject to both these higher powers. cf. Upham's "Life," p. 41

but keeping them in captivity and subjection as much as they are able.

Then let them in this attitude say the *Lord's Prayer*, understanding in some measure what they say, and believing that God, Who is within their soul, is very willing to be their *Father*. Being in this disposition, let them beg their needs of Him, and having pronounced this word *Father*, let them continue some moments in silence with much reverence, waiting that their Heavenly Father may be pleased to discover unto them His Will.

At other times the Christian, considering himself as a child that is quite spent, and soiled all over through his repeated falls, and who has no power either to stand on his legs, or make himself clean, should lay open his shameful condition to his Father in an humble manner, adding every now and then some expressions of love and regret, and again remaining in silence. Thereafter going on with the *Lord's Prayer*, let him pray this King of

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Glory to reign in him; giving up himself to Him indeed, to the end that He may do it, and surrendering to Him the just right which He hath over him.

If he perceive an inclination to peace and silence, he ought not to proceed, but to abide in that state while it lasteth. After which he may go on to the next petition, viz: *Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven.** Whereupon these humble suppliants are to desire that God may accomplish all His will in them and by them; they must give their heart and their liberty unto God, that He may dispose thereof at His pleasure; and seeing that the peculiar work of the will should be to love, they must desire to love, and ask of God His pure love. But this ought to be done in a calm and peaceful manner, and so of the rest of the Lord's Prayer; and this may very well be taught by those who have the care of souls.

Men ought not to overburden themselves with too many Paters and Aves, nor with other spoken prayers; a single Pater said in the way which I have just described, will avail much.

Again, they may place themselves as sheep before their Shepherd, and ask of Him their true substantial food. *O Divine Shepherd! Thou feedest Thy sheep with Thyself, and Thou art their daily bread!*

They may also lay before Him the necessities of their families; but all must be done in view of the direct and principal faith that God is within us.

Under whatsoever figure men represent God unto themselves, the figure is not God; a lively faith of His presence is sufficient; for we must not form any image of God, though we may indeed of Jesus Christ; beholding Him as a child, as crucified, or in any other state or mystery, provided that the soul do always seek Him in its own centre.

Again we may consider Him as our Physician, and present unto Him our wounds, that He may heal them;* but still without any effort, and with some little silence interposed from time to time, so that the silence may be mixed with action; thus by degrees increasing the silence, and lessening the discourse, until in the end by means of yielding gradually to the operation of God, He may get the ascendant in us, as we shall note hereafter.

When once the presence of God is given, and the soul begins by little and

Compare the experience described in the following lines:

*Straight to thy presence get me and reveal it,
Nothing ashamed of tears upon thy feet,
Show the sore wound and beg thine hand
to heal it,*

*Pour Thee the bitter, pray Thee for the
sweet.*

*Then with a ripple and a radiance through me
Rise and be manifest, O Morning Star!
Flow on my soul, thou Spirit, and renew me,
Fill with thyself, and let the rest be far.*

F. W. H. Myers' *S. Paul.*

little to relish the silence and stillness, this experimental sense of the Divine Presence introduceth it into the second degree of prayer; which is attained both by such as can read, and such as cannot, by taking the method above described; though indeed God does favour some privileged souls with it even from the beginning.

CHAPTER IV.

1. The second stage of Prayer, called here the Prayer of Simplicity; and when it is time to rise to it.

2. How to make it and sustain it.

3. Conditions of success in it.

SOME call the second degree of Prayer "The Prayer of Contemplation," The Prayer of Faith and Stillness; others give it the name "Prayer of Simplicity." I shall here use the latter name as being more fit than that of Contemplation, which signifies a prayer more advanced than that of which I speak. When the soul hath exercised itself for some time as aforesaid, it feels by degrees that the power of applying itself to God with ease is given

to it, that it can recollect itself more easily, and prayer becomes easy, sweet, and delightful; it knows now that this is the way to find God, for it feels the savour of His unction. But then it must alter its method, and seek to perform faithfully and courageously what I am going to say, without being troubled at what may be alleged concerning it.

First, so soon as the soul recollecteth and placeth itself in the presence of God by faith, let it continue thus a little in awful silence.

But if, from the beginning, it feels some little sense of the Divine Presence, let it stop there without troubling itself about anything or proceeding further; and let it hold what is given it, so long as it lasteth. If this passeth away, then let it stir up its will by some tender affection; and if by the means of the first affection it finds itself placed again in a sweet peace, let it continue therein. We must blow the fire gently, and when it is once

kindled, cease to blow it more; for if one should go on to blow it still, he would but extinguish it.

I advise above all, that no one may ever conclude his prayer without continuing for some time towards the end in a solemn silence. 'Tis likewise of great importance for the soul to go to prayer with courage, and that it bring along with it a pure and disinterested love; let it not go so much to receive anything from God, as to please Him and do His will. For a servant who serves his master only according as he rewards him, is indeed unworthy of any reward at all. Go therefore to prayer, not desiring to get joy of God, but only to be as He pleaseth. This will preserve in you an evenness of spirit, alike in the time of abundance and the time of dryness,* and keep you from wondering either at God's repulses or your own drynesses.

* *Fr. Sécheresse* the technical word of the mystics is "aridity." r

CHAPTER V.

Concerning various things accidental or appertaining to this Prayer, to wit:—

1. Dryness of heart, caused by the absence of God from consciousness, which is for some wise end; and how this must be endured with acts of goodness, and in peaceableness of spirit and of heart.

2. Some advantages in acting thus.

THOUGH God hath no other desire, but to communicate Himself to the soul that loves and seeks Him, yet He often hideth himself, that He may rouse it from its laziness, and

oblige it to seek after Him with love and fidelity. But Oh! with what bounty doth He reward the faithfulness of His well-beloved! And how much are His withdrawals followed with divine consolations! Some are apt to think that 'tis a greater sign of fidelity, and argues more of one's love, to seek Him with efforts of the head and the force of one's own activity; or that these will quickly make Him return. No; believe me, dear souls, this is not at all the conduct of this state of prayer; for 'tis necessary, that with a loving patience, a lowly and humble regard, a constant, but peaceable affection, and a solemn silence, ye wait for the return of your Beloved. You will let Him see, by this manner of acting, that 'tis He alone, and His good pleasure, that you love, and not the pleasure you may have in loving Him. Therefore, *be not impatient in the times of darkness, suffer the delays and suspensions of the consolations of God: be resigned under*

*every state of mind, and thereby shall the divine life grow and be renewed.**

Be ye always patient in prayer, and though ye should not make any other prayer all your life-time but to wait in a humble, resigned and contented spirit, for the return of your Beloved, oh! you would pray to excellent purpose. In the meantime you might pour out some expressions of love. This way of proceeding doth mightly please God, and more powerfully prevails with Him than any other.

** Ecclus. ii, 1, 2, 3.*

*My son, if thou comest to serve the Lord,
Prepare thy soul for temptation :
Set thy heart aright, and constantly endure,
And make not haste in time of calamity.
Cleave unto him, and depart not, [end.
That thou mayest be increased at thy latter*

CHAPTER VI.

- 1, 2. Concerning faith's surrender to God, its fruitfulness, and its irrevocability.
3. In what it consists, and how God exhorts us to it.
4. The practice of the same.

AT this point resignation and the entire surrender of ourselves unto God must begin; namely, by being convinced that whatsoever befalls us from one moment to another, and whatsoever we lack, is in the order and will of God. This conviction will render us content with everything, and make us look upon all that happens to us as coming from God, and not from the creature. I conjure you, my dearest brethren, whoso-

ever you be that are willing indeed to give yourselves unto God, never to take back yourselves again, when ye have once given yourselves to Him; but believe that a thing which is given away is no more at your disposal.

Surrender is that which is of the greatest consequence in the whole Christian path; nay, 'tis the key of the whole inward life. Whosoever doth fully surrender himself, shall in a short time, become perfectly united unto Christ. We must therefore keep firmly to surrender, without attending to calculating suggestions. A great faith makes a great surrender; we ought to commit ourselves unto God, *Hoping against all hope.*¹

Surrender is a putting off all care of ourselves, that we may leave all that concerns us entirely to the conduct of God. All Christians are exhorted thus to surrender themselves; for unto all it is said, *Take*

* *Rom. iv, 18.* "Who in hope believed against hope."

ye no thought for the morrow; for your Heavenly Father knoweth what ye stand in need of,* In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths;† Commit thy works unto the Lord, and He will establish thy thoughts;‡ again, Commit thy whole way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.||

Our surrender then ought to be an entire leaving of ourselves in the hands of God, both in respect to the outward and inward state, forgetting ourselves in a great measure, and thinking on God only; by this means the heart remains always free, contented, and disengaged.

As to the practice of this virtue, it consists in a continual forsaking and losing all self-will in the will of God; in renouncing all particular inclinations, how good soever they may seem to be, as soon as we feel them arise in us, that

* *Matt. vi, 31—33.*

‡ *Prov xvi, 3.*

† *Prov. iii, 6.*

|| *Psalms xxxvii, 5.*

we may always stand in the state of indifference, willing only what God from eternity hath willed, and be indifferent as to all things that regard either the body or the soul, temporal or eternal riches; forgetting what is past, giving up the time present to God, and leaving to His providence that which is to come; making ourselves content in the actual moment, seeing it brings along with it the eternal order of God concerning us, and makes for us a declaration of His will as infallible as it is common and inevitable for all; not attributing anything that befalls us to the creature, but beholding all things in God, and considering them as coming infallibly from His hand, our own sin only excepted.

Suffer yourselves therefore to be led by God, as it shall please Him, both with respect to your outward and inward state.*

* *cf Tauler* "They turn their thoughts inward, and remain resting in the inmost foundation of their souls, simply looking to see

CHAPTER VII.

1. Of suffering; how it must be accepted at the hand of God.
2. Its fruits and its uses.
3. The practice of the same.

BE content to suffer whatsoever God shall see fit to lay upon you. If you love Him purely, you will in this life seek Him as much on Mount *Calvary* as upon *Tabor*.

You must love Him as much upon *Calvary* as *Tabor*, since that is the place where He discovers the most of His love.

Do not be like to those persons who

the hand of God with the eyes of their enlightened reason, and await from within their summons to go whither God would have them."

Sermons: Kingsley's Edition, p. 184.

give themselves unto Him at one time, and take themselves back at another. They give themselves up to be caressed, but they draw themselves back again when they are crucified, or rather they go to seek for their consolation in the creature.

No, dear souls, you will never find true consolation but in the love of the cross and an entire surrender. *He that hath no relish of the cross, savoureth not the things that be of God.** 'Tis impossible to love God without loving the cross; and indeed a heart which hath the relish of the cross, findeth even the most bitter things to be sweet, pleasant, and delightful. *The hungry soul findeth bitter things sweet,†* because as it hungers after God, so doth it hunger after the cross. God gives us the cross and the cross gives us to God.‡

* *Matt. xvi, 23.*

† *Prov. xxvii, 7.*

‡ "Our Lord made me comprehend that I must be conformable to Him in all His states; and that, if He had still continued in a private life with His parents, He never had

The great sign of internal advancement is if one advanceth in the cross. Surrender and the cross go hand in hand.

Whensoever anything occurs to which you feel a repugnancy, resign yourselves immediately to God with respect to this very thing, and give up yourselves as a sacrifice unto Him. Then ye shall see that when the cross cometh, it will not be so very heavy, because you have willingly accepted it; which, notwithstanding, will not keep you from feeling the weight of it. Some imagine that to savour of the cross is not to *feel* suffering; but to *feel* suffering is one of the principal parts of suffering itself. Jesus Christ chose to endure the utmost sharpness of suffering. We often bear the cross in weakness, at other times with strength; all ought to be alike to us in the will of God,

been crucified; that when He would resign any of His servants to crucifixion, He employed such in the ministry and service of their neighbours."

Madam Guyon's Autobiography, chap. xvii.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. Concerning Mysteries: God gives them to us here in realised experience.

2, 3. We must suffer ourselves to be drawn to them or withdrawn from them by God, as he pleaseth, with a loving regard.

SOME may object to me, that at this rate one cannot have any sense of the *mysteries* impressed upon him; but 'tis quite otherwise, for these are given in reality to the soul. Jesus Christ to Whom we surrender ourselves, and Whom we follow as the Way, Whom we hear as the Truth, and Who animateth us as the Life,* impressing Himself on

* *John xiv, 6.*

the soul, makes it to bear all His several states. Now to bear the states or conditions of Jesus Christ, is a far greater thing than barely to consider the states of Jesus Christ. St. Paul used to bear in his body the states of Jesus Christ. *I bear* (saith he) *in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus;** but he does not say that he reasoned about them.

In this state of surrender Jesus Christ often giveth us some insight into His states after a very particular manner. Then it behoveth us to receive them, and to suffer our minds to be applied to anything that pleaseth Him; taking equally all the dispositions that He shall see fit to place us in, not choosing one of ourselves, but only this to continue always with Him, to desire Him affectionately, and to empty

* *Gal. vi, 17*

*cf. "Yet it was well, and Thou hast said in season
As is the master shall the servant be
Let me not subtly slide into the treason,
Seeking an honour which they gave not Thee."
Myers' S. Paul.*

ourselves of ourselves* before Him; receiving with an evenness of mind all that He doth give us, whether light or darkness, fruitfulness or barrenness, strength or weakness, sweetness or bitterness, temptation, distraction, pains, troubles, or doubtings; nothing of all these should stop us,

There are some persons whom God doth appoint for the space of whole years to partake of some one or other of these mysteries. The simple sight or thought of such a mystery gathers them inwards; therefore they ought to be faithful to it; but when God removes it from them, then let them be willing to be deprived of it. There be others who are troubled because they cannot think of any one mystery; but this is without

cf. Chap. xā, and also Theol Germanica, chap. xvi. "The more the Self, the I, the Me, the Mine, that is, self-seeking and selfishness abate in a man, the more God's I, that is God Himself, increase in him."

reason, seeing that affectionate attention to God includeth all particular devotion; and *whosoever is united to God alone by abiding in Him,** is indeed applied to all the mysteries in a most excellent manner. He that loveth God, loveth everything that is His.

* *S. John, xv, 4.*

CHAPTER IX.

1, 2. Concerning Virtue. All kinds of Virtues come hand in hand with the possession of God, and abound according to the degree of prayer in the heart;

3. And that with ease,

THIS is the short and certain way to acquire virtue; because God is the principle of all virtue, to possess Him is indeed to possess all virtue; and the nearer we approach unto this possession, the more we have of virtue in an eminent degree. Again, I say, that all virtue which is not given from within is but a mask of virtue, and is like a garment which is put on or off at pleasure. But the virtue that is com-

municated from within is the only true, essential, and permanent virtue; *The beauty of the King's daughter cometh from within*,* and of all people there are none who practise it more vigorously than these I describe, though they do not think of the virtue in particular. For God, to *Whom they keep themselves united*, makes them to perform it in all its kinds.† Oh what hunger have these devout souls after sufferings! To how many austerities would they deliver themselves if they allowed themselves to act according to their desires. They think only on what may please their Beloved, and so they begin to neglect themselves and contemn themselves; the more they love their God, the more do they hate themselves and disrelish the creature. Oh if men could but learn this most easy method,

Ps. xlv, 13 (Vulgate): omnis gloria ejus filiae regis ab intus.

The original adds: "il ne leur souffre rien, il ne leur permet pas un petit plaisir."

which is fitted for anyone, for the dull and ignorant as well as the learned, how easily would the whole church of God be reformed! There needs no more but to love. Love, saith St. Austin, *and do then what ye* will.* For when we love indeed, we cannot will anything that may displease our Beloved.*

* *God is love, and he that abideth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

I John iv, 16.

A Method of Prayer.

CHAPTER X.

1. Of Mortification; how it is never perfectly acquired from without;

2. But by applying oneself to God within;

3. Which dispenses with externals as much as is fitting.

4. The beginning from which a true conversion follows.

I SAY further, that it is next to impossible for one ever to arrive at the perfect mortification of his senses and passions by any other way than the love of God. The reason is very plain, for it is the soul that gives life and vigour to the senses, and likewise the senses which irritate and raise the passions. A dead

man hath no more sense or passion left in him because of the separation which is made betwixt the soul and the senses. All the labour which is done in the outward part carries the soul still more outwardly,* and especially into the things to which it doth apply itself more vigorously. It is in these things that it expands itself most; being applied directly to strictness and rigour in externals, it is wholly turned that way, and thereby invigorates the senses instead of mortifying them. For it is only from the application of the soul that the senses can draw anything of force or vigour, and the more the soul is in them, the more doth it still enliven them. This life of sense doth move and provoke the passions, so far is it from extinguishing them.

Austerities may well weaken the body, but can never blunt the edge or vigour of the senses, for the reason just now mentioned. One thing alone can do it, which is this, that the soul by

means of recollection be turned wholly inward or within itself, to the end it may be taken up with God Who is there present. If the soul turn all its vigour and force within itself, it is separated from the senses by this very action alone; and so employing its whole force and strength within, it leaves the senses without vigour; and the more it advances and approaches to God, the more it is disjoined from itself. This is the reason why those persons in whom the attractions of grace are strong, do find themselves wholly weakened in the outward man, so as many times to swoon or faint away.

I do not by this mean that we ought not at all to mortify ourselves; no! for mortification must always accompany prayer, according to the measure of every one's strength and circumstances, and in our duty of obedience. But I say, that none ought to make mortification their chief exercise, nor absolutely to tie themselves to such and such austerities; but by simply

following the inward attraction and employing themselves with the Divine Presence, without thinking of mortification in particular, God does make them to undergo all sorts of discipline; and He gives no respite to the souls that are faithful in surrendering themselves unto Him, until He has mortified in them all that remains there to be mortified.

Therefore we must keep ourselves only attentive to God, and all will make for greater perfection. All persons are not capable of outward austerities, but all are capable of this. There are two of our senses in the mortifying of which we cannot well exceed, namely, the seeing and hearing; (because these take in the species and ideas of things;) but God doth it effectually; we need only to follow His Spirit.

The soul has a double advantage by observing this conduct; namely, that according as it withdraws from the outward, it draws still nearer unto God; and by

approaching unto God, besides the secret power and virtue it receives which support and preserve it, it departs as far from sin as it approaches nearer to God; till at last it is brought to an habitual conversion.

CHAPTER XL

1. A true conversion, which is an effect of this kind of prayer; and how it is brought about.

2, 3. Two aids to conversion; God's drawing the soul, and the soul's natural impulse to its centre.

4. The practice of the same.

*T*URN ye and be converted unto God in the bottom of your hearts, according as you have deeply revolted from Him.* Conversion is nothing else but the turning away from the creature to return unto God. Conversion is not complete, though good and necessary for salvation, so long as it only

* *Isa. xxxi, 6. (Vulgate). Convertimini sicut in profundum recesseratis.*

turns from sin to grace; to be complete* it must turn from the outward state to the inward.

The soul being once converted, or turned to God, finds very great ease in continuing thus turned unto Him; and the more it continues turned, the nearer it approacheth God and cleaveth to Him; and the nearer it approacheth God, the farther doth it necessarily withdraw from the creature, which is opposed to God. So that hereby the soul is so powerfully confirmed in its conversion, that it becomes habitual, and as it were natural to it. But you must know that this is not done by any violent working or exercise of the creature. The only exercise it can and ought to perform on its part is, by the grace of God, to exert a strong endeavour to turn and gather itself inward; after which there is nothing more to be done, but to remain thus turned towards God in a continual adherence unto Him.

* See note on the word "*parfaite*."

God has an attractive virtue which draweth the soul always more and more strongly to Himself, and in drawing it He purifies it; just as we see the sun drawing up a thick vapour to itself; it attracts it gradually, the vapour using no other endeavour but to let itself be drawn by the sun; which the nearer it brings it to itself, the more it subtilises and purifies it. There is only this difference, that this vapour is not drawn freely, and followeth not voluntarily, as the soul doth.

This manner of introverting or turning inward is most easy, and advanceth the soul not by constraint but by her most natural bias to God, because He is our centre. The centre hath always a most powerful attractive virtue, and the more eminent and spiritual the centre is, the more violent and impetuous is its attraction or magnetism, and the more difficult it is to stop its attraction.

But besides the attractive virtue of

the centre, there is also given to all creatures a mighty strong propension to a re-union with their centre; hence the most spiritual and perfect have this inclination strongest in them. No sooner does a thing return towards its centre, than it precipitates with an extreme swiftness into it, if so be that it be not stopped by some invincible impediment in the way. A stone in the air is no sooner let go towards the earth, than by its own proper weight it ~~tends~~ tends to it as its centre. Just so is it with water and fire, which unless they are hindered, run incessantly to their centre. And thus it is that the soul, by the strong endeavour which it uses to gather itself inward, being once turned into this bias to its centre, falls gradually into its centre, without any other effort but the weight of its love; and the more it continues peaceable and calm, without its own motion, the more swiftly doth it advance, because it gives the more place to the

attractive and central goodness, to draw it strongly into itself.*

We ought then to make the habit of recollecting ourselves, as inwardly as is possible, the chief concern and not be troubled at the pain and difficulty which this exercise may give us; for that will

* *Stones towards the earth descend;*

Rivers to the ocean roll;

Every motion has some end;

What is thine, beloved soul?

Thine is where my Saviour is;

There with him I hope to dwell;

Jesus is the central bliss;

Love the force that doth impel.

Byrom (xvii century): in

Overton's Law, p. 149.

Eckhart (xiv century) had written: "Consciously or unconsciously all creatures seek their proper state. The stone cannot cease moving till it touch the earth; the fire rises up to heaven: thus a loving soul can never rest but in God; and so we say that God has given to all things their proper place. to the fish the water, to the bird the air, to the beast the earth, to the soul the Godhead."

Compare also S. Austin's "O God thou hast made us for Thyself and our heart is restless until it rest in Thee."

be very soon recompensed by a wonderful concurrence on God's part which will render it most easy; provided we be faithful meekly and gently to call back our heart by a little sweet and peaceful retreat, and by serene and tender affections, whenever it is withdrawn through distractions or outward business. When at any time the passions arise, a little retreat inwards unto God, Who is there present, doth allay them with great ease; any other way of engaging with them does rather exasperate than quiet them.

CHAPTER XII.

1. A higher stage of Prayer, which is the Prayer of the simple presence of God, or of an active contemplation, of which one can say but little here, reserving the rest for another treatise.

2, 3, 4. How self-activity and our own toil vanish in an act vital, full, abundant, divine, easy, and natural; which is far from idleness and the suppression of all doing, as the Anti-Mystics object, missing its meaning; which argument is clearly set forth in several beautiful comparisons.

5. Transition to Intuitive Prayer, where the fundamental and vital action of the soul is not lost, but is inspired more abundantly and fully (as also are the other faculties) by that of God.

9. The ease of the Divine

Ways, and an exhortation to surrender ourselves to them,

THE soul that is faithful in exercising itself, as hath been said, in love and affection to its God, is all amazed when it feels how by little and little He gets the entire possession of it. His presence becometh now so easy to the soul that it can no more be without it; it has acquired a habit of this as well as prayer. The soul feels the calm and serenity prevailing upon it by degrees; the silence maketh up its whole prayer, and God giveth it an infused love, which is the beginning of an unspeakable happiness. Oh! were I permitted to proceed and declare the infinite degrees that follow! But here I must stop, since that I write only for beginners, waiting till God shall be pleased to bring forth what may be serviceable for all states.

It must suffice only to say that then it

is of great consequence to cease from all self-activity, that God alone may act in us. *Be still and acknowledge that I am God,* is what He adviseth us by David.* But the creature is so fond of what it does itself that it believes it does nothing if it do not feel, know and distinguish its own operation. It does not see that the swiftness of its motion hindereth it from perceiving its steps, and that God's operation becoming more abounding swalloweth up that of the creature; even as we see that the sun as it arises, doth gradually swallow up all the light of the stars, which were very distinct before he appeared. It is not for want of light that we cannot then distinguish the stars, but for the excess of light.

The case is the same here; the creature cannot distinguish its own operation because a general and strong Light absorbeth all its little distinct lights, and by His

* *Ps. xlvii, 10.*

surpassing splendour and brightness makes them entirely disappear. So that they who charge this sort of prayer with idleness are very much mistaken; and 'tis for want of experience that they say so. Oh did they but give themselves some little trouble to make trial of it! they would in a very little time know it experimentally.

I tell you therefore that this abatement of self-activity proceeds not of want but of abundance, as any that will make the experiment will clearly perceive. He will know that it is not an unfruitful silence, occasioned through want, but a silence full and gracious^{*} proceeding from abundance.

Two sorts of persons are silent, the one because they have nothing to say, and the other because they have too much. The case is the same in this degree of prayer of which we speak. They are

^{*} *Lit. unctuous.*

silent not for want, but through fulness and excess.

Water causes death to two persons in a very different manner. One dieth of thirst, and the other is drowned; one dieth through the want, and the other through the abundance of it. Even so here, it is the abundance that makes the operations to cease. Therefore it is of great importance in this degree for one to remain in as much silence as he possibly can.

An infant at the nurse's breast gives us a sensible demonstration of this. It begins to move its tender lips that it may cause the milk to come; but when the milk cometh in abundance, it is content to swallow it down without making any sensible motion; if it should make any, it would but prejudice itself by spilling the milk, and so be obliged to give over.

Just so at the beginning of prayer, we ought first of all to move the lips of our affection, but when the milk of grace doth

flow, there is nothing to be done by us, but to abide in stillness and repose, gently swallowing down what is given in; and when the milk ceaseth to come, to move again the affection a little, as the infant doth the lip. Should we do otherwise, we could not profit by the grace which is here communicated to draw the soul into the repose of love, and not to excite it to the multiplicity of its own motions.

But what becometh of this child that swalloweth the milk so gently and in peace, without moving or stirring? Who could believe that it was nourished by this manner? And yet the more it sucks in peace, the more it thrives by the milk. What is it, I say, that happeneth to this child? Why it falleth asleep in its mother's bosom; and likewise the soul that is quiet and peaceful in prayer, falleth oftentimes into a spiritual* (or inward) slumber, wherein all the faculties and powers

* *Mystique* see note on word.

thereof are silent, until they are prepared to enter into the essence of that which is given them transiently. You see how the soul is here led in a way that is wholly natural, without pain, without violence, without study, without artifice.

The inward ground is not a stronghold that is to be taken by cannon and storm; 'tis a kingdom of peace which is gained only by love. And thus if any one will but sweetly follow in this train, in the aforesaid manner, he shall quickly arrive at intuitive* prayer. God does not require anything that is extraordinary or too difficult; but on the contrary, a merely simple and child-like way of proceeding doth please Him best.

That which is greatest and most eminent in religion, is indeed the easiest of all. The most necessary Sacraments are the easiest. This is also true in natural

*Infusé=intuitive? or should we adopt
another metaphor and say at once
"inspired?"*

things. Would you go to sea? Then take boat upon a river, and you shall get at it insensibly and without trouble. Would you go to God? Take this so very sweet and easy way, and you shall shortly come at Him in a manner that will even surprise you.

Oh! if you would but make the trial you would soon be convinced that we have told you but very little of it; for then your own experience would go very far beyond all that we have said. What are you afraid of? Why don't you readily cast yourself into the arms of essential Love, Who stretched them forth upon the cross only that He might receive you. What danger can there be in trusting God and simply surrendering yourself to Him? Ah! He will not deceive you, unless it be in a very agreeable manner, namely, by giving you much more than you expect; whereas they who expect anything from themselves, may come to hear that rebuke which God giveth them

by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, *Thou hast wearied thyself in the multiplicity of thy ways, and yet thou hast never said, let me rest in peace.**

Is. lvii, 10. (Vulgate.) In multitudine viae tuae laborasti: non dixisti: Quiescam.

R.V. Thou wast wearied with the length of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. Of rest before God, Who is present to the soul in a wonderful manner.

2. Fruits of this peaceable presence.

3. Advice concerning conduct in the practice of the same.

THE soul being arrived hither, hath no need of any other preparation (for going to God) but of its *Rest*. For here it is that the presence of God begins to be intuitive and almost continual all the day long, which is the great fruit of prayer, or rather the continuation of it. Here the soul enjoys in its inward ground an inestimable happiness; it finds that God is more in it than itself.

It hath but one thing only to do that it may find Him, which is to sink down into itself. So soon as it shuts its bodily eyes it finds itself taken up into a state of prayer; it stands amazed at this Infinite Good, and there passes a conversation within it, which the outward man doth not interrupt. That may be said of this manner of prayer which is spoken of wisdom, *All good things are come along with it.** For the virtues flow sweetly into the soul† which likewise practiseth them after so easy a manner that they seem natural to it. A seed or spirit of life and a fruitfulness springeth up in her, which giveth a receptivity to all that

* *Wisd., vii, 11.*

† *O my God, how well I comprehend in this silence that in souls, which are wholly thine, thy grace flows like a river! This is that well of waters springing up into everlasting life, the great mystery which Christ spoke of, and opened to the Samaritan woman.*

*Madame Guyon's Autobiography,
chap. xx, pt. II.*

is good, and an insensibility to all that is evil. Let it therefore faithfully persist in this state, and beware that it seek not after any other disposition whatsoever, whether of confession or communion, action or prayer, but its simple rest; it has nothing to do but to suffer itself to be filled with the pouring out of the Divine Nature. I do not mean to speak of the preparation necessary for the Sacraments, but of the most suitable inward disposition for receiving them, and this is that of which I have spoken.

CHAPTER XIV.

1, 2. Of silence in the inward life; the reason thereof; God requires it.

3. Silence in the outward life, retirement, and the return in to oneself, are all aids thereto.

*THE Lord is in His holy temple
let all the earth keep silence
before Him.**

The reason why the inward silence is so necessary is because this is a proper disposition, and is requisite for receiving into the soul the Word, which is the eternal and essential speech.

It is a well known truth that in order

* *Hab, ii, 20*

to receive the outward Word, we must give ear and hearken. The sense of hearing is made for receiving the Word, which is spoken or communicated to it. The hearing is a sense more passive than active; it receiveth, but doth not communicate. And because the internal essential Word desireth to speak within the soul, and to communicate itself to, and revive and quicken it, it is absolutely necessary that the soul be attentive.

On this account it is that there are so many places in scripture which exhort us to hear God, and to be attentive to His voice. We might easily observe a great many of them, but 'twill be sufficient to mention these two or three. *Hearken unto Me all ye that are My people, and give ear unto My voice O nation that I have chosen!** *Hearken unto Me all ye whom I bear in My bosom, and whom I carry in My bowels!†*

Isa. li, 4.

† *Isa xlvii, 3 (Vulgate)*

*Hearken, O My daughter! Consider and incline thine ear, forget thy kindred and thy father's house, so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty.**

External silence is most necessary to cultivate the internal; and indeed 'tis impossible to become inward without loving silence and retirement. God Himself tells us so by the mouth of His prophet, *I will lead her into solitude, and there will I speak to her heart.*[†] How can one be inwardly taken up with God, and yet be outwardly busied about a thousand trifles? This is certainly impossible. It is necessary to listen to God and to make oneself attentive to Him, to forget oneself and all our individual interests.

When your weakness at any time has led you to be scattered and distracted abroad you must make a little retreat or

* *Ps. xl. 10, 11.*

Hos. ii, 14 (Vulgate). The R. V. is less emphatic "I will speak comfortably." The Vulgate follows the Hebrew literally.

retire inwards; and to this you must always be faithful whensoever you are scattered and dissipated. It would signify but little to pray and recollect oneself for half an hour or an hour, if we do not preserve the unction and spirit of prayer all the day long.

CHAPTER. XV.

1, 2, Examination of the conscience; how it is made in this state, and that by God Himself,

3, 4, Of Confession, Contrition, and the forgetfulness or remembrance of faults in this state,

5. This is not to be applied to earlier states. Communion.

EXAMINATION ought always to go before confession, but the examination ought to be conformable to the state of the soul. These two actions alone (or rather passions, for this is quite passive) make us receptive towards the love of that beauty which He Himself communicates. They that

would perform it aright, must lay themselves open before God, Who will not be wanting in enlightening them, and making them to know the nature of their faults. But they must take care to examine themselves in peace and tranquillity, expecting to have the knowledge of their sins given them from God, rather than from their own particular scrutiny.

When we exert any strong endeavours in examining ourselves, we are readily mistaken; we believe *the good to be evil, and the evil good*,* and self-love easily deceives us. But when we expose ourselves before the all-seeing God, this divine Sun discovers to us even minutest jots and tittles. Therefore we ought to abandon and resign ourselves to God, both as to examination and confession.

So soon as the soul is advanced to this manner of prayer, God takes particular

care to reprove it for all the faults it commits. It is no sooner guilty of any default, but it feels a certain burning that rebukes it. Then it is that God makes an inquiry, in which He does not suffer anything to escape; and then the soul has nothing to do but to turn itself simply towards God, and to suffer the pain and correction which He inflicts.

Now this examination on God's part being continual, the soul cannot any more examine itself; and if it be faithful in resigning itself to God, it will be much better tried and searched into by His divine light, than it can be by all its own anxieties; and experience will convince it that this is true.

As to Confession, you must needs take notice of one thing; namely, that souls which walk in this way will be often surprised to find that when they begin to confess their sins* unto God, instead of

* "*lors qu'elles s'approchent du confessional.*"

sorrow and contrition, which they were wont to feel, a sweet and serene love seizes their heart. Those who are not acquainted with this matter would, it may be, withdraw from it to form an act of contrition, because they have heard say that this is necessary. And so it is. But they don't perceive that they lose the true contrition, which is this intuitive love, infinitely more important than anything they could do of themselves. They have here one eminent act which comprehends the other acts with more perfection, though they have not these distinct and multiplied as before. Therefore let them not give themselves the trouble to do any other thing, when God acteth thus graciously in them, and with them.

To hate sin in this manner, is to hate it as God doth. The purest love of any is that which God effects in the soul. Let it not therefore be eager to act, but let it remain such as it is, following in the wise man's counsel, *Put your trust*

*in God, and continue in rest in the place where He hath set you.**

The soul will wonder also that it should forget its defects and have such difficulty to remember them; yet it ought not to be troubled at this, for these two reasons; one is, because this forgetfulness is a sign of its purification from the fault; and the excellency of this state consisteth in this; namely, to forget all that concerneth us, that we may remember God only,

The other reason is, that God faileth not to discover to the soul its greatest faults when it is necessary for it to make confession, for He maketh the inspection Himself; and the soul will see that by this way it shall better compass its end, than by all its own endeavours.

This is not to be applied to those earlier states where the soul being yet in

* *Ecclus. xi, 21.*

*Marvel not at the works of a sinner,
But trust the Lord, and abide in thy labour.*

the active state, may and ought to use its care and industry in performing all things, more or less according to the measure of its advancement. But as to the souls that are come up to this degree, let them keep to what we have told them, and let them not change their simple exercises. It is the same for Communion; let them suffer God to act, and let them keep silence. God cannot be welcomed better than by God within.*

Dieu ne peut être mieux reçu, que par un Dieu. This no doubt refers primarily to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the sense in which it is said that in that ceremony "God is made and eaten all day long,"—to receive the wafer being to receive God. But another interpretation might be put upon the words which is more consistent with mysticism. An Eastern parable tells of one, a lover of God and man, who came to the Divine Beloved's door, and knocked. "Who is there?" asked a voice. "It is I." The voice made answer. "This house will not hold Me and Thee." The lover went out into the desert to fast and pray. After a year of solitude and silence he knocked again. "Who is there?" "It is Thyself," and the door was opened. All access to

CHAPTER XVI.

1. Of* Reading and of Vocal Prayers; few to be made.

2. And not contrary to inclination unless they are a duty laid upon us,

THE manner of reading in this state is, that as soon as one feels a little recollection of mind, he ought to cease, and to remain in stillness, reading but little, and not going on after he finds himself drawn into the inward. The soul is no sooner called to inward silence, but it ought to forbear to burthen itself with vocal prayers, except a very few; and even in those if it finds

God may be described as the meeting of the God within and the God without.

any difficulty, and feels itself drawn to silence, it should abide silent, and not strive or use any effort against it; unless the prayers be a duty laid upon us, in which case it is right to go on with them. But if they are not so, let them be stopped as soon as the inward drawing is felt.

Let the soul not vex itself, nor fetter itself, but suffer itself to be led by the Spirit of God, and it will find satisfaction in all its devotions in the more excellent way.

CHAPTER XVII.

1. Of Petitions. Private requests cease, to make way for the intercession of the Spirit of God.

2. In this matter we are to give room for Surrender and for Faith.

HERE the soul will find itself unable to make those requests to God, which at other times it was wont to do with great ease. But it ought not to be surprised at this; for then is it that the Spirit asketh for the saints that which is good and perfect and agreeable to the Will of God; *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, because we know not what to pray for as we ought, nor how to pray; but the Spirit*

*Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.**

Moreover, I say, we must second God's design, which is chiefly to strip the soul of its own operations, that He may substitute His in their place. Suffer Him then to do it and do not tie yourself to any thing of yourself, how good soever it may seem to be; for to be sure 'tis not then good to you, if it turn you away from that which God desireth for you; but the Will of God is preferable to all other good besides. Rid yourself therefore of your own interests, and live by faith and surrender; here it is that faith begins to operate in the soul in the highest measure.

Rom viii, 26.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. Of Defects and Infirmities committed in this stage; to withdraw therefrom towards God, without anxious and discouraging uneasiness.

2. The contrary is enfeebling, and is opposed to the practice of humble souls.

WHENSOEVER we have fallen into any defect, or have at any time gone out of the way, we must immediately turn inwards; because this default having led us away from God, we ought as soon as possible to return unto Him, and suffer patiently the compunction which He worketh in us.

It is a matter of great importance not to be vexed or disturbed because of our

defects; for this trouble or disquiet proceedeth from a secret pride, or from the love and esteem of our own excellence. We are uneasy when we feel what we are; but if we despond or discourage ourselves thereby, we are weakened so much the more; and the reflection we make upon our faults begetteth in us a peevishness or fretting, which is worse than the fault itself. Trouble and disquiet do but sink and entangle the soul the more; whereas a vigorous act of conversion to the Divine Presence within us, attended with a lively faith and a humble confidence, doth infallibly extinguish the temptation, dispel the darkness, and overcome the enemy. For one that stands in God's presence must needs hate sin, as God hateth it.

A soul that is truly humble doth not at all wonder at its infirmities; and the more it seeth itself miserable, the more it surrenders itself to God and endeavoureth to keep close to Him, seeing the great

need that it hath of His assistance. We ought to observe this conduct so much the more that God Himself hath taught it us, saying, *I will make thee to understand what thou oughtest to do, I will teach thee the way by which thou shouldest go, and I will have my eye continually upon thee for thy guide,**

Ps. xxxii, 8.

CHAPTER XIX.

1. Of Distractions and Temptations; how to break away from these by turning away towards God.

2. This the conduct of the Saints; to do otherwise is but to expose ourselves.

IN all our distractions and temptations, instead of combating them directly (which would only increase them, and take the soul off from adhering to God, which ought to be its continual employment) we ought simply to turn away our eye from them, and draw nearer and nearer to God; like a little child who, seeing a monster, doth not play at fighting him, nor yet even look at him, but meekly sinketh down into its mother's

bosom, where 'tis safe and secure. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; He will help her, and that right early.*

When we poor feeble creatures do otherwise, thinking to attack our enemies, we find ourselves often wounded if not entirely defeated; but continuing simply in the presence of God, we shall soon find ourselves more than conquerors. This was David's conduct. *I have, said he, the Lord always present with me, and I shall not be moved; therefore my heart rejoiceth, and my flesh also shall rest in safety.*† And again 'tis said *The Lord shall fight for you, and you shall keep yourselves in peace.*‡

* *Ps. xlvii, 5.*

† *Ps. xvi, 8, 9.*

‡ *Exodus xiv, 14.*

CHAPTER XX.

1, 2. Prayer as Divine Service and Sacrifice, divinely explained by the similitude of a sweet-smelling odour.

3. Our self-annihilation in this sacrifice.

4, 5. Thoroughness and fruitfulness of this prayer, according to the Gospels.

PRAYER ought to be both Divine Service and Sacrifice; according to St. John's account of it, it is an incense whose sweet smelling savour ascends to God; for which purpose in the *Apocalypse the angel held a censer, in which was the perfume of the prayers of the saints.**

* *Rev. viii, 3.*

Prayer is the pouring out of the heart in the presence of God; thus said Samuel's mother, *I have poured out my heart in the presence of the Lord.** Therefore the prayer, which the Royal Magi poured forth at the feet of the child Jesus in the stable of Bethlehem, was signified by the incense which they offered. Prayer is nothing else but a warmth of love which, as it melts and dissolves the soul, subtilizes it and causes it to ascend even to God; according as it is melted, so it gives forth its sweet smell, and this smell cometh from the love which burneth in it.

This the spouse meaneth when she saith, *While my beloved was on his couch, my spikenard sent forth the smell thereof.*† The couch is the ground or centre of the soul; while God is there, and one knows how to dwell with Him, and keep in His presence, this presence

* *I. Sam. i, 15.*

† *Cant. i, 12. Vulgate: "in accubito suo." R.V. "at his table."*

gradually melts and dissolves the hardness of the soul, and being melted it sends forth its odour. And therefore the Beloved seeing that *his spouse was thus melted as soon as he had spoken*,* saith to her, *Who is this that ascendeth out of the wilderness as a little cloud of perfume?*†

Thus doth the soul ascend to her God. But to this end it must suffer self, or its own will to be destroyed by the power of divine love. This is a state of sacrifice essential to the Christian religion, whereby the soul suffereth the destruction of its own will, that thereby it may render true homage to the sovereignty of God; as 'tis written, *God alone is great, and He is honoured only by the humble.*‡ And the annihilation of ourselves confesses the Sovereign Being of God. We must cease to be ourselves that the mind of the Word may be in us; in order that He may

* *Cant. v, 6,* "My soul had failed me when he spake."

† *Chap. iii, 6. (Vulgate)* ‡ *Ecclus. iii, 20.*

come, we must yield our life to Him and die to ourselves so that He may Himself live in us;* so that our own will, or the life of self being dead, our life may be hid with Christ in God.† In which consisteth that adoration that giveth all honour, glory, and power, unto God and our Redeemer for ever and ever.

This is the prayer of truth; this is to worship the Father in spirit and in truth.‡ In Spirit because we are thereby drawn from our human and carnal man-

* Here follows in the original: "*Jesus Christ dans le S. Sacrement de l'autel, est le modèle de l'état mistique. Si-tôt qu'il y vient par le parole du Prêtre, il faut que la substance du pain lui cède la place, et qu'il n'en reste que les simples accidents. De même il faut que nous cédions notre être à celui de Jesus Christ: et que nous cessions de vivre, afin qu'il vive en nous.*"
To how rare an atmosphere have the wings of faith carried the crutches of superstition!

† cf. "*Ante obitum mortuus, post obitum vivus*" the epitaph of St. Francis, of Assissi.

‡ John iv, 23.

ner of acting, to enter into the purity of spirit which prayeth in us. And in *Truth* because the soul is thereby placed in the truth of the All of God, and of the Nothing* of the Creature.

There are only these two truths, the *All* and the *Nothing*; everything else is a counterfeit. We cannot honour God's *All* but by our own *nothingness*; and we are no sooner emptied of ourselves, than God, Who allows not anything to be void without filling it, doth replenish us with Himself.†

Oh did we but know the infinite good

* *Néant.*

†

*If thou couldst empty all thyself of self
Like to a shell dishabited,
Then might He find thee on the ocean shelf,
And say "This is not dead:"
And fill thee with Himself instead.
But thou art all replete with very thou
And hast such shrewd activity,
That when He comes, He says:—"This is enow
Unto itself—Twere better let it be:
It is so small and full, there is no room for Me."*

"Indwelling" by T. E. Brown.

which accrues to the soul from this prayer, we would scarce do anything else! This is the pearl of great price; this is the hidden treasure.* He that findeth it most cheerfully selleth all that he hath to purchase it. This is the river of living water, rising up into eternal life.† This is to worship God in spirit and in truth.‡ And this is to practise the purest precepts of the Gospel.

Doth not Jesus Christ assure us *That the kingdom of God is within us?* || This kingdom is understood two ways. One is when God is so much master of us that nothing doth any more resist Him; then our inward life is truly His Kingdom. The other is when possessing God Who is the sovereign good, we possess the Kingdom of God, which is the height of well being and the end for which we were created; according to the

* *Matt. xiii, 44, 46.* ‡ *John iv. 23.*

† *John iv, 14.* || *Luke xvii, 21.*

proverb, as it is said, *To serve God is to reign.* The end for which we were created is to enjoy God, even in this life;† yet alas, how little is this in our thoughts.

† “*What is man’s chief end? To glorify God, and enjoy Him for ever.*” [*Shorter Catechism.*] *The theologian and the mystic are at one; would the theologian accept the mystic as interpreter of his meaning?*

CHAPTER XXI.

The accusation of idleness and inaction, which some make respecting this kind of Prayer, fully met; and it is shown that the soul is here acting in a manner noble, vigorous, tranquil, active, free, simple, gentle, moderate, sure; but dependent on the working of God, acted upon by His Spirit for and by the communication of His life, and in order to a union with Himself; all disquietude and the taint of self being done away with,

The Prayer
of
Silence.

WHEN some persons hear of the Prayer of Silence, they groundlessly imagine that therein the soul is placed in a state of dullness, and

is lifeless and inactive. But certain it is that therein the soul acteth more nobly and with more enlargement than ever it did hitherto; because in this kind of prayer it is moved by God Himself, and it acteth by His Spirit. St. Paul would have us suffer ourselves to be led by the *Spirit of God*.*

We do not say that the soul ought not to act at all, but only that it ought to act dependently on the movement of grace. This is admirably described in the prophet Ezekiel's vision of the wheels; "*The Wheels*," which he saw, "*had the spirit of life, and they went whithersoever that spirit led them; they were lifted up or stood abased, ever according as they were moved, for the spirit of life was in them; but they never returned back.*"† Thus ought it to be with the soul; it should suffer itself to be moved and led by the quickening spirit that is

* *Rom. viii, 14.* † *Ezek. i, 19-22 (A paraphrase).*

in it, following still the movement of its action, and never following any other. But this motion never inclines it to go back; that is either to turn back upon the creature, or to bend towards itself; but to go always straight forward, advancing continually towards its end.

The Serene
Movement
of the
Soul to its
Centre
in God.

This action of the soul is an action altogether quiet and serene. When it acteth by itself, it acteth with hurry and fatigue and this is the distinct character of its own action. But when it acteth dependently on the spirit of grace, its action is so free, so easy, and so natural, that it seemeth as though it did nothing. *He hath brought me forth into a large place, He hath delivered me because He loved me.**

So soon as the soul hath got into its central bent and tendency, that is to say

* *Ps. xviii, 19. R.V. "Delighted in me."*

returned within itself by recollection, from that instant it begins to run its course towards its centre, the attractions of which give it at once the greatest vigour and the swiftest motion; for no swiftness is equal to that of its central tendency. This then is an action, but it is so noble, so quiet, and so peaceable, that it seemeth to the soul as though it doth not act at all, because its operation is so natural.

While a wheel is slowly turned 'tis easy to perceive its motion distinctly, but when it goeth very swiftly we can no longer distinguish anything in it; just so the soul which continueth before God in quietness, hath an infinitely noble and elevated action, but withal an action that is most peaceable. The more the soul is in peace, the more swiftly it runneth; because it is wholly surrendered to that spirit which moveth it and maketh it act.

The Divine
Bridegroom.

This Spirit is no other than
God Himself Who draweth us,

and drawing us maketh us to run unto Him; as the Divine Lover well knew when she said *Draw me, and we will run.** Draw me, O my Divine Centre, by the profoundest deep of my being, and by this Thy attraction the powers and senses shall all run to Thee! This attraction alone is both an ointment which healeth, and a perfume which draweth us; *we will run*, saith she, *because of the smell of Thy perfumes*; this is a most powerful attractive virtue, yet a virtue which the soul follows most freely, and which, being equally strong and sweet, both draws by its power and charms by its sweetness. *Draw me*, saith the spouse, *and we will run*. She speaketh of herself, and to herself, *Draw me*,—mark the unity of the centre and

* *Cant. i, 4.*

cf.

*"When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home."*

Tennyson.

that which is attracted; *we will run*,—mark the running and correspondence of all the powers and senses, which follow the attraction of the inward ground of the soul.

The Harmony of the Creature and The Creator. Therefore we do not in the least affirm that we ought to remain idle, but that we ought to act only in dependence on the Spirit of God, which should animate us, since *'tis only in Him, and by Him, that we live, and move and have our being.** This meek dependence upon the Spirit of God is absolutely necessary; the soul has been created a simple unit like God. In order to attain the end of its creation, we must quit the multiplicity of our actions, that we may enter into the simplicity and unity of God *in Whose image we were created.†* *The Spirit of God is*

* *Acts xvii, 28*

† *Gen. i, 27.*

one only and manifold,* or multiplex, yet His unity hindereth not at all His multiplicity. We enter into His unity when we are united to His Spirit,† as having thereby one and the same spirit

Wisd. vii., 22. For there is in her a spirit quick of understanding, holy, sole-born in kind, manifold, subtle, fively moving, etc.

† *It is not too much to say that all the great mystical expressions of religion and theology are modes of approaching the final unity, . . . The one in whom we live and move and have our being as separate persons must be more than personal. . . In all the imagery used to represent the relation which Christ as Divine Son bears to His people. . . . will be found this idea of union, in and with the Father, by means of union in and with the Son, and the underlying fact of that union is always the unity of the Father and the Son. Christ includes His people just because He is one with the Father.*

"Idealism and Theology" by Charles D'Arcy. Hodder & Stoughton. This book contains suggestions from which a philosophical rationale of Madame Guyon's Experiences might be constructed; and especially an argument for a "Super-personal unity."

with Him; and, without departing from this unity, we are multiplied outwardly in what regardeth His Will. So that God, acting infinitely, and we, suffering ourselves to be led by His Spirit, go much further than our utmost activity could carry us.

We must suffer ourselves to be guided by the eternal wisdom: *For this wisdom is more active than most mobile things.** Let us then abide in dependence upon His actions, and we shall act indeed most powerfully.

How to
Restore the
Lost Image. *By the Word were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made.†* God created us at first after His own image and likeness, and He inspireth into us the spirit of the Word, by that breath of life‡ which he gave us when we were formed to God's Image, by the

* *Wisd. vii, 24. Wisdom is more mobile than any motion.*

† *John i, 3.*

‡ *Gen. ii, 7.*

participation of the life of the Word, Who is the image of the Father; now this life is one, simple, pure, intimate, and always fruitful. The devil having spoiled and disfigured this beautiful image by sin, it was necessary that the same Word, whose spirit was breathed into us at our creation, should come to repair it. It was needful it should be done by Him, because He is the essential image of The Father, and the (defaced) image does not repair itself by acting, but in being passive to the action of Him Who came to repair it.

Our action therefore ought only to be, to put ourselves in a condition to suffer God's acting upon us, and to give place unto the Word to new-model again His image in us. An image that should always be in motion, would hinder the painter from drawing any design upon it. All the motions which we make by our own spirit, do hinder this admirable Painter from working, and do occasion

the making of imperfect strokes. We must therefore remain in peace, not moving ourselves but when He moveth us. *Jesus Christ hath the life in Himself** and every one that would live must receive life from Him.

The Life
Indeed.

That this action is the more noble is a matter without dispute, for certainly things have no value or worth but so far as the principle whence they proceed is noble and sublime. The actions of a divine principle are divine actions; whereas the actions of the creature, how good soever they seem to be, are but human, or only virtuous in the highest sense when they are done with grace. Jesus Christ saith that *He hath the life Himself*; all other things have nothing but a borrowed life, but the Word hath the life in Himself; and being communicative of His nature, He desireth to communicate His life to men. There

* *John v, 26*

fore we must give way to this life, that it may flow into us; which cannot be done but by the emptying ourselves, and by the loss of the life of Adam and our own will, as St. Paul assures us, *If any one be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; all that was old is done away; all is become new;** which cannot be done but by the death of our own self-activity, to the end that the action of God may be substituted in the place of ours.

It is not therefore pretended that men should not act at all, but only that all our doings should be in dependence on being guided by the Spirit of God, giving way to His action in place of that of the creature, which cannot be done but by consent of the creature; and the creature cannot give this consent but by moderating its own activity, giving way by little and little that God's operation may succeed in its stead.†

* *II. Cor. v. 17.*

† *See note. The Passive State.*

An ^{Acceptable} Spirit. Jesus Christ in the gospel teaches us this way; *Martha* did good things, but, because she ^{did} them in her own spirit, He reproved her. The spirit of man is turbulent and unquiet, and therefore it doth but little though it appear to do a great deal. *Martha, Martha,* said Christ, *you disquiet and torment yourself with a great many things; but after all, there is but one thing needful. Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her.**

What hath Mary chosen? It is peace, tranquillity, and rest. She ceaseth to act in appearance, that she may suffer herself to be moved by the Spirit of Jesus Christ; she ceaseth to live, that so Jesus Christ may live in her; and thus it is necessary to renounce oneself and one's own operations, if we would follow Jesus Christ; *for we can never follow Jesus Christ*

* *Luke x, 41, 42.*

*unless we are animated by His spirit.**
 Now, that the Spirit of Christ may be brought forth in us, it is necessary that our own spirit give place to Him. *Whosoever doth cleave or adhere to the Lord, saith, St. Paul, becometh one spirit with Him.†* And David said, *It was good for him to cleave unto God, and to put his whole confidence in Him.‡*
 What is this adhesion? *It is a beginning of union.*

The Stages
 of Union.

In this union there is a beginning, continuation, finishing and perfect consummation. The beginning or entering into our union, is an impulse of the soul towards God. When the soul is introverted or turned inwards, in the manner aforesaid, it is in a tendency to its centre, and hath a strong propension to union. In this propension is

* *Rom. viii, 9 (paraphrased).*

the Lord is one spirit.

† *I. Cor. vi, 17. "He that is joined to*

‡ Ps. lxxiii, 28.

the union begun. Afterwards it adhereth, which makes it approach nearer to God; then it is united with Him; and thenceforward it comes into union, that is, it becomes of the same spirit with Him. Then it is that this spirit which went forth from God, returns back unto God; this being its sole end.

The Divine
Filiation This divine movement, this spirit of Jesus Christ, is the way we must of necessity walk in, for St. Paul assures us that *no man is Jesus Christ's, if he hath not His spirit.** Now, that we may be one with Christ, we must suffer ourselves to be emptied of our own, that we may be filled with His Spirit which we cannot be so long as we are full of ourselves. St. Paul in the same place further proves the necessity of our being thus moved by this blessed spirit, when he saith, *All they that are moved by the Spirit of*

* *Rom. viii, 9.*

God are the children of God.* The spirit of the divine filiation is then the spirit of a divine movement in us† therefore the apostle continues, The spirit ye have received is not a spirit of bondage to make you fear; but it is the spirit of God's children, whereby, we cry, Abba, Father!*

By no other spirit than that of Christ can we partake of His filiation or sonship; and this spirit doth itself bear witness

* Rom. viii, 14.

† Tauler. Sermon for Christmas Day. [Kingsley's Edition]. "Now such a one is made a Son of God when he is born again in God, and this takes place with every fresh revelation of God to his soul. A man is born of the Spirit when he suffers God's work to be wrought in his soul; yet it is not this which makes the soul to be perfectly blessed, but that revelation, of which we have spoken already, makes the soul to follow after Him who has revealed Himself to her, and in whom she is born anew with love and praise. Thus she returns again to her first source and is made of God's grace a child of God, united to Him in rightful love."

to ours, that we are the children of God.* So no sooner doth the soul let itself be moved by the Spirit of God, but it experienceth in itself the testimony of the divine filiation; and this testimony so greatly increaseth its joy that it gives the soul clear evidence that *it is called to the liberty of God's children, and that the spirit which it hath received is not a spirit of servitude, but of liberty.* The soul then feels that it acteth freely and sweetly, though with force and decision.

The Prayer of The Spirit St. Paul proves from our ignorances concerning the things we pray for, the necessity of our being in all things conducted, moved and animated by this Divine Spirit; *The Spirit, saith He, helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray for, nor how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself prayeth for us with groanings*

* A Rendering of Rom. viii, 15, 16.

which are unutterable. This is certain; if we do not know what we want, nor yet how to pray as we ought for those things which are necessary for us; and if the spirit that is in us, to whose motion we surrender ourselves, must needs ask and pray for us, ought we not then to let this Spirit do it? He does it *with groanings which cannot be uttered.* This Spirit is the Word, Whose petition is always heard and granted, as He^{*} said Himself; *I knew that Thou hearest Me always.** Did we let this Spirit pray and intercede in us, we should always have our petitions heard and granted. And why so? Teach us great Apostle, Spiritual Doctor, and Master of the inward life! *It is,* addeth St. Paul, *because He that searcheth the hearts, knows what the spirit desireth, for as much as He intercedeth according to God for the Saints;—†*

* *St John xi, 42*

† *Rom. viii, 27. (Vulgate)*

that is to say, because this Spirit asketh for that only which is conformable to the will of God. The will of God is that we should be saved, and that we should be perfect. He therefore asks for that which is necessary for our perfection.*

Rest in God Why then, after all this, do we oppress ourselves with superfluous cares, and weary out our lives in the multiplicity of our own ways, without ever saying, *Let us rest in peace?* God Himself inviteth us to rest from all our labours and disquiets, and to stay ourselves on Him; nay, He complaineth in the prophet Isaiah, with an inconceivable goodness, that we employ the soul's strength, its riches and its treasure, in a thousand outward things, when there is so very little to be done that we may enjoy the infinite good things which we propose to ourselves. *Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which cannot*

* See note on word "*parfait*."

*nourish you? And your labour for that which cannot satisfy you? Harken unto me attentively, feed yourselves with the good nourishment which I do give you; and your soul being made fat therewith, shall indeed rejoice.**

Oh that men did but know what a happiness it is to hearken unto God in this manner, and how exceedingly the soul is thereby strengthened! *All flesh must needs be silent in the presence of the Lord."*† All must cease and be still so soon as He appeareth. Now God, to oblige us yet further to surrender ourselves to Him without any reserve, assureth us by His prophet, that we need not be afraid of anything in giving up ourselves to Him; because He taketh care of every one in particular, *Can a mother forget her own child, saith God, and have no compassion on the son whom she hath*

* *Is. lv, 2. (Vulgate).*

† *Zec. ii, 13.*

*carried in her womb? But even though she should forget, yet will not I ever forget you.** Oh words full of divine consolation! Who will any longer be afraid to surrender himself to the guidance of God?

** Is xlix 15.*

CHAPTER XXII.

1.—5. Distinction between acts outward and inward; and how in this state those of the soul are inward but habitual, continued, direct, living, deep, simple, unconscious, and like a gentle and continual bathing in the ocean of God's love.

6. Of what the soul does in this state.

7, 8. A beautiful similitude.

9. How to act without rousing self-consciousness.*

* *Fr Sans attrait aperçu*

Of Inward
Acts

THE acts of man are either external or internal. The external are those that appear outwardly with

regard to some sensible object, and which have no other moral good or evil but what they receive from the internal principle whence they proceed.

I do not intend to speak of these, but only of internal acts, which are the actions of the soul whereby it inwardly holds to some object and so forsakes another. If, when my soul is applied to God, I will do some act of another nature, I thereby forsake God; and I turn myself towards created things according as my act is more or less strong. If, when my soul is turned towards the creature, I wish to return to God, there must be an act to withdraw my soul from the creature, and to turn it to God; and by how much the more complete this act is, by so much the more entire is the conversion. But till I am perfectly converted, I am continually under a necessity of separate acts in order to turn to God; that may be accomplished by some at once which others do by little and little; however, in

each act I ought to exert the whole strength of my soul to return to God, according to the counsel of the Son of Sirach, *Reunite all the motions of thy heart in the holiness of God.** And as David did, *I will keep my whole strength for Thee;†* which is done by entering strongly into oneself; as saith the scripture, *Return to your heart.‡* For we have wandered from our heart by sin; and therefore God demands just our heart. *My son give Me thy heart, and let thine eyes be always fixed upon My ways.||* To give one's heart to God is to have at all times the eye, the force, the vigour

* Reference doubtful. perhaps *Ecclus. xxxix, 5*, is intended

† *Ps. lix, 9. (Vulgate): Fortitudinem meam ad te custodiam R.V. O my strength I will wait upon thee.*

‡ *Isaiah xlvii, 8. R.V. Bring it to mind. cf. also Ecclus. :*

A man's soul is sometime wont to bring him tidings,

More than seven watchmen that sit high on a watch-tower.

|| *Prov. xxiii, 26.*

of the soul fixed upon Him, that one may perfectly follow His will in all things. Wherefore, when the heart is once applied to God, it ought to continue thus turned towards Him.

To Counteract the Soul's Dissipation. But the mind of man, being frail and prone to levity, the soul,—thus accustomed to roam abroad,—is easily diverted and dissipated, and therefore so soon as it perceives itself wandering abroad amongst outward things, it must, by a simple act, return towards God, and reinstate itself in Him; then its act will subsist so long as its conversion lasteth, in virtue of its simple and unfeigned return to God. We know actions often repeated make a custom, so that the soul will be accustomed to turning to God, and to an act which becomes altogether natural as it recurs.

Then the soul ought not to perplex itself in seeking to form this act, because it already subsists; nay, it cannot do it,

without finding very great difficulty in it; besides it will find that hereby it is drawn from its proper state under pretence of seeking after it, which is a thing it should never do, seeing that the relation is constant, and the soul is then in an habitual conversion and in an habitual love. Men seek after one act by several other acts, instead of keeping themselves fixed by a simple act to God alone.

Some one may observe that sometimes he can with great ease make such acts distinctly, but simply; which is a sign that he was gone astray, and that now he enters again into his heart, after he had wandered from it. But let him take care to remain there in peace, now that he is returned to it. When anyone thinks that he ought not to perform any acts, he is much mistaken, for he performs always some things; but everyone ought to perform them according to the degree to which he is advanced.

Important
Distinctions.

To clear up this section^{*} fully (which is indeed some difficulty, the greatest part of spiritual persons not comprehending it) you must know that some acts are transient and distinct and others are continued; again, some acts are direct and others reflex. All cannot form the first, neither are all in the proper state for forming the second. The first sort of acts ought to be made by the persons who are gone astray; they ought to turn themselves again by an act which they distinguish, and which should be more or less strong, according as the turning aside was greater or smaller; so that when the straying is but little, one of the most simple acts is sufficient.

I call that the continued act, in which the soul is wholly turned towards its God by a direct act, which it does not renew (unless perhaps it may have been interrupted) but the relation endures. The

** endroit.*

soul, I say, being turned after this manner, is indeed in *love*, and dwelleth therein. *And he who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God.** Then the soul hath entered, as it were, into the habit of the act, in which it *repose*th. But its repose is not idle; for then your act which continues all the while, is in fact a sweet retirement into God, to which God attracteth it always most strongly, and the soul readily following this powerful attraction, and abiding in His love, is always more and more ingulfed and swallowed up in love; and here its action is infinitely more strong and more vigorous, than the first act which served for nothing but to bring it home from its wandering.

Unconscious Acts Now the soul in this profound and strong act, being wholly turned towards its God, hath not any perception of its own action because it is direct and not reflex; which is the

* *I. John iv, 16.*

reason that some persons not explaining themselves well, say that they do not act at all; but it is a mistake, for the soul never does anything better or more effective. Let it rather say, "I do not now distinguish any acts;" and not "I do not do any acts."

'Tis true, the soul doth not do them by itself, but is drawn, and followeth that which draweth it. Love is the weight which sinketh it down, as a person falling into the sea sinketh, and would sink even to infinity, if the sea were infinite; and without perceiving his envelopment, he would descend into the lowest deep with an incredible swiftness.

Therefore to say that one doth no acts is to speak improperly. All do acts but all do them not after the same manner; and further, the mistake cometh hence that many who know they must do acts, would do them distinctly and sensibly. Which indeed cannot be; for those of which we are sensible are for begin-

ners, and the others are for advanced souls. To stop in the first acts, which are weak and advance but little, is to deprive oneself of the last. So in like manner, to endeavour to do the last acts without having passed through the first, were another no less considerable error.

All things then ought to be done in their proper season. Every state hath its *beginning*, its *progress*, and its *end*.^{*} He would be very wrong who should resolve not to go further than the beginning. There is no art which hath not its progress. At the beginning there must be a labouring with toil, but then there follows an enjoyment of the fruit of one's labour.

A Parable of those who go down to the Sea in Ships. When a ship is in the dock, the mariners are forced to take pains to launch her thence into the main ocean; but afterwards they easily

^{*} *Eccl. iii, 1.* "To every thing there is a season," etc.

turn her to any coast whither they would steer. In like manner, while the soul is yet in sin and in the creature, there is struggling and toil required to draw it out thence; there must be an untying of the cords which hold it bound; then, by means of strong and vigorous acts, efforts to draw the soul inward, removing it by little and little from its own port; and in removing it from thence it is turned inwards to God, which is the haven whereunto we desire to sail.

Where the vessel is turned after this manner, just as she advanceth in the sea, she is at a distance from the land; and the further she is from the land, the less need is there of any labour to draw her along. At last the mariners begin to sail most pleasantly, and the vessel runs so forcibly that they must quit the oars, which are now become useless. What doth the pilot then? He is content to spread the sails and hold the rudder. To spread the sails is to

make the prayer of simple exposing or laying oneself open before God, in order to be moved by His Spirit. To hold the rudder is to keep our heart from wandering out of the right path, recalling it gently, and guiding it according to the motion of the Spirit of God, which by degrees getteth possession of the heart, even as the wind cometh by little and little to fill the sails and drive on the vessel. So long as the ship hath the wind astern the pilot and mariners cease from their labour, and repose themselves. How much way do they now make without fatiguing themselves? They make more way in one hour in reposing themselves after this manner, and leaving the vessel to the conduct of the wind, than they could do in a great deal of time by all their utmost efforts at first; and if they could then row, besides greatly fatiguing themselves, their labour would be quite useless, and they would retard the vessel.

This is the very conduct which we

ought to observe in the inward life, and by acting in this manner we shall advance more in a little time by the divine motion than we can in any other way, by a great many of our strugglings and efforts. Would people but take this method they would find it the easiest in the world,

The Anchor
of
Faith. When the wind is contrary
and the storm great, the anchor
must be cast into the sea to stop the
vessel. This anchor is nothing else but
confidence in God, and hope in His good-
ness, waiting in patience for the calm
and for fair weather, till the wind
prove favourable again; as did David; *I
have waited, saith he, for the Lord with
great patience, and He hath at last
stooped even to me,** We must there-
fore surrender ourselves to the Spirit of
God, leaving ourselves to be guided by
His motions.

* *Ps. xl, 1.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

1, 2. The unprofitableness of Preaching. How vices, error, heresies, and all manner of evils come because the people are not directed to Prayer of the Heart;

3, 4, 5. Although this way is the most sure and the most fit even for simple folk, and the easiest.

6, 7, 8. Exhortation to Pastors to set souls thereto, without detaining them with affected Prayers and conventional love.

IF all those that labour to gain souls did endeavour to win them by the heart, putting them from the first upon prayer and into the inward life; they would make numberless and lasting conversions. But so long as they go to

work by that which is external, and instead of drawing souls to Jesus Christ by the occupation of the heart in Him, do only load them with a thousand precepts for outward exercises; there comes but very little fruit thereof, and even that little does not endure.

If ministers would zealously instruct their parishioners after this manner, the very shepherds in keeping their flocks might have the spirit of the primitive Christians;*

And the ploughmen in guiding their ploughshares might entertain themselves in a blessed intercourse with God; the tradesmen and labourers that are spending themselves with toil, might gather from thence everlasting fruits; wickedness might be banished in a little time, and all their parishioners become spiritual.

To Capture the Citadel.	For when once the heart is won, all the rest is easily corrected. The point is that God principally
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* *Fr. Anacorites.*

demands the heart. By this method alone drunkenness, blasphemy, immorality, animosity, theft, and the whole train of evils, which do universally prevail, might be lessened. Christ might reign peaceably over all, and the face of His church might be renewed once again in every place. Heresies are entered into the world through the loss of the inward life; if this were established again, those errors would soon be destroyed. Error gets possession of souls only through want of faith and of prayer; if we taught our wandering brethren to believe simply, and to pray, instead of much disputing with them, we might bring them back gently to God.

Oh what inestimable losses are sustained by the neglect of this simple instruction! Oh what account have those persons that have the charge of souls to give to God, for not having discovered this hidden treasure to all whom they serve by the ministry of the Word!

The Quibblings of Unfaith Refuted. They excuse themselves under the pretence that there is danger in this way, or that common people are incapable of the things of the spirit. But the oracle of truth assures us of the contrary, saying, *The Lord placeth His affections on those who walk in simplicity.** And what danger can there be in walking in the one only Way, which is Jesus Christ, giving ourselves entirely to Him, beholding Him continually, putting our whole confidence in His grace, and seeking with all our strength after His pure love?

So far is it from being true that the simple are incapable of this essential accomplishment, that they are indeed the more fit for it; because they are more teachable, more humble, and more innocent; and because not being used to reasoning, they do not so much adhere to their own opinions; being moreover

Prov. xii, 22. They that deal truly are His delight.

without knowledge, they let themselves be moved more easily by the Spirit of God; whereas others, who are tied down and blinded by their own self-sufficiency, do resist a great deal more the divine inspiration. Thus * God declareth to us that 'tis to the little ones that He giveth the understanding of His law; *The entrance of Thy word, saith David, giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple,** He assures us likewise that he loveth to converse familiarly with the simple ones.† *The Lord preserveth the simple; I was reduced to extremity and He saved me.‡* Let the fathers of souls then take heed, not to hinder the little children from coming to Christ. *Suffer these little children,* said He to His apostles, *to come unto me; for it is unto them that the kingdom of heaven doth belong.||* Jesus Christ said this to the apostles, because

* *Ps. cxix, 130.*

† *Prov. iii, 32. His secret is with the righteous.*

‡ *Ps. cxvi, 6. || Matt. xix, 14. (Vulgate).*

they would have hindered the children from coming unto Him.

Why Ministers Oftentimes ministers apply the
Fail with
Working , remedy to the body, and mean
Folk while the disease is at the
heart. The great reason why their success in the reformation of men is so small and transient, especially of labouring persons, is, because they set about it outwardly. Did they but give them at first the key to the inward life, reformation of the outward actions would naturally follow. Now this is most easy; to teach them to seek God in their hearts, to think upon Him, and to return unto Him there, whenever they find themselves distracted, to do all things and suffer all things with a design to please Him,—this is to send them to the fountain of all good, and to show them where to find all that is necessary for their sanctification.

An Appeal. I earnestly conjure all you who minister to souls, to put them im-

mediately into this Way, which is Jesus Christ; and He conjures you also by all the blood which He hath shed for these souls whom he hath entrusted to your ministry: *Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem*.* O ye dispensers of His mercies! O ye preachers of His word! O ye ministers of His sacraments! Establish His kingdom; and that you may establish it truly, make Him to reign over hearts! For as it is the heart alone which can oppose itself to His empire; so it is by the total subjection of the heart that His sovereignty is the most honoured. *Give ye glory to the holiness of God, and He shall become your sanctification*.* Teach your people how to pray, not by reading forms of devotion (for simple people cannot follow them), but by the prayer of the heart, and not

Isaiah xl, 2. The usual quotation, "Speak ye comfortably," etc., is less forcible than Madame Guyon's.

Isaiah viii, 13. R.V. The Lord of hosts, him shall ye sanctify.

of the head; a prayer of the Spirit of God, and not of man's invention.

The Fervent
Prayer of a
Righteous
Man.

Alas! Men will be making studied prayers; and while they seek to adjust them too much, they render them impracticable. They have estranged the children from the best of all fathers, in teaching them a language too polite. Go ye, poor children, speak to your Heavenly Father in your own language; how barbarous and rude soever it be, it is not so to Him. A father loveth rather a discourse, which love and respect may put into disorder (forasmuch as he seeth that this cometh from the heart), than an harangue that is dry, empty and barren, though never so well studied. Oh how mightily do the glances of love in the heart delight and please Him! They express infinitely more than all language and all arguments.

The Futility
of

Men in endeavouring to teach
Love by Rule. how to love Love by Rule and

Convention, have in a great measure lost the love itself. Oh how little necessary it is to teach an art of loving! The language of love is barbarous to him who loves not, but it is very natural to him who loves; and one can never better learn how to love God than by loving Him. Acting on this plan the most dull become the most expert, because they behave themselves more simply and more cordially. The Spirit of God hath no need of our regulations; He taketh up shepherds, when He pleaseth, to make of them prophets; and so far is He from shutting the palace of prayer against any one, as some imagine, that, on the contrary, He leaveth all the gates thereof open to all; and wisdom crieth in the public places, *Whoso is simple let him come unto Me.** And she saith unto them that are without understanding, *Come ye, eat of the bread which I*

* *Prov. ix, 4.*

give you, and drink of the wine which I have prepared you. Doth not Jesus Christ thank His Father, That He hath hidden His secrets from the wise, and hath revealed them to the little ones.†*

* *Prov ix, 5.*

† *Matt xi, 25.*

CHAPTER XXIV.

What follows after the ways hitherto set forth; there remains a way of harmony preparatory to the Divine Union; more passive than those set forth, in which the wisdom and justice of God work a passive and rigorous purification of the soul, which only co-operates in this, that it maintains a passive content, by which the soul conforms itself to God and then is united to Him; and afterwards passes to a state of Oneness of Life with God, and henceforth carries itself accordingly. All of which is treated in detail in a later Treatise of Spiritual Torrents.

IT is impossible to arrive at the divine union by the way of meditation only, or even of the affections; or by any

luminous and distinctly comprehended prayer whatsoever. There are several reasons for it; mark here the principal ones,

Union with God and Egotism incompatible In the first place, according to the Scripture, *No man shall see God so long as he is living.** Now all the exercises of discursive prayer, or even of active contemplation (considered as an end in itself, and not as a disposition to the passive) are living exercises, whereby we cannot see God, that is to say, be united to Him. It is necessary that whatever is of man and of his own industry, how noble and exalted soever it may be,—'tis necessary, I say, that all this should die. St. John reports that *in heaven there was a great silence.†* Heaven represents the ground and the centre of the soul, where all must be in silence when the majesty of God appears therein; and all the efforts of

* *Exod. xxxiii, 20.*

† *Rev. viii, 1.*

our own egotism,* and all our own self-sufficiency must be destroyed; because nothing is opposite to God so much as egotism; and all the malignity of man is in this egotism, it being the source of his malice; so that *the more any soul loseth its egotism the more pure it becometh; and that which would be a defect in a soul living to itself is no longer so (by reason of the purity and innocence which it hath contracted), since it lost the egotism which caused the severance between God and the soul.

Propriete See note on this word and compare *Autobiography*, chap. xvi "What I could not tolerate in her was her regard for herself I saw clearly that the devil cannot hurt us, but so far as we retain some fondness for this corrupt self. This sight was from God, Who gave me this discerning of spirits That this point be not mistaken it is needful to mention here that souls which are yet in themselves, whatever degree of light and ardour they have attained, are unqualified for it Our Lord had destroyed in me every sort of natural antipathy.

How Union is effected. Secondly, to unite two such contraries as are the purity of God and the impurity of the creature, the simplicity of God and the multiplicity of man, 'tis needful that God alone do operate. For this never can be effected by the effort of the creature, since two things cannot be united which have no harmony or similarity to each other; even as an impure metal will never be fully united with gold that is solidly pure.

What doth God do in this case? He sendeth before Him His own wisdom; even as the fire shall be sent upon the earth to consume by its activity whatsoever is impure therein. The fire consumeth all things, and nothing resisteth its activity. It is the same with wisdom; it consumeth every impurity in the creature, to dispose it for the divine union.

This impurity, which is so opposite to divine union, is egotism and self-activity;—egotism, because it is the source of impurity, which never can be joined with

essential purity; even as the rays of the sun may indeed touch the dirt, but cannot unite with it;—activity, because God being in an infinite rest, 'tis necessary, in order to the soul being made capable of union with Him, that it do partake of His rest; without which he cannot be united with it by reason of the discrepancy between them; since that two things may be united, 'tis necessary that they be in a proportionate rest.

And it is for this reason that the soul arriveth not at the divine union, but by the resting of its will; and it cannot be united unto God until it be in a central rest, and in the purity of its creation.

As Gold is To purify the soul, God
tried
in the Fire. maketh use of wisdom; as fire
is made use of to purify gold. It is
certain that gold cannot be purified but
by the fire, which consumes by little and
little all that is earthly and of a contrary
nature therein, and separates it from the

gold. It is not enough for gold, in order to be made use of by the goldsmith, that earth be changed into gold; 'tis necessary further that the fire do melt and dissolve it in order to draw out of its substance whatever remains in it that is of a foreign or earthly nature; and this gold is cast often into the fire, till it loseth all impurity, and every disposition that is capable of being purified.

When the goldsmith can find no more foreign substance, because it is come to its perfect purity and simplicity, the fire can no more act upon the gold; and it might be there an age without being made thereby more pure, and without any the least diminution of its substance. Then it is fit for the most excellent works. And if this gold become impure at any time afterwards, these are defilements newly contracted only by its commerce with foreign bodies. But there is this difference, that this impurity is merely superficial and doth

not make it unfit for use; whereas the other impurity was hidden in its very being and, as it were, interwoven with its nature. Nevertheless persons who are unacquainted with this, seeing a piece of pure gold that is truly refined, covered outwardly over with filth, would not value it so much as they would a piece of coarse gold that is very impure, when its outside is polished.

Moreover you may observe that gold of an inferior degree of purity cannot be joined with that of a superior degree of purity; there is a necessity for the one to contract the impurity of the other, or for this to partake of the purity of that. To mix fine gold with coarse is what the goldsmith will never do. What will he then do? He will cause all the earthly mixture of the impure gold to be destroyed by the fire, to the end he may be able to unite it with the purity of the first. And this is it that St. Paul saith, namely, *that our works shall be tried as by fire,*

*that what is combustible may be burnt.**
 He addeth that those works which shall be found fuel for the fire shall be burnt, although he himself (the worker) shall be saved, yet so as by fire. The meaning is that there are certain works which are accepted and approved; but to the end that he who hath wrought them may be also pure it is needful that they pass through the fire, that so the egotism may be taken from them; and it is in this sense that God will judge our righteousness;† because man shall never be sanctified by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of the faith which cometh of God.‡

The Sum of Leaving this parable I say, that the Matter.

to the end man may be united to his God, it is necessary that His wisdom, accompanied with the divine justice

* *I. Cor. iii, 13, 15.*

† *Ps. lxxv, 2. R. V. has merely "judge rightly."*

‡ *Rom. iii, 20, 22.*

as a pitiless and consuming fire, should root out of the soul all whatsoever it hath of earthly, carnal, and self-centred egotism;* that having cleansed and purified the soul from all this, God may unite Himself to it.

This can never be done by the industry of the creature; on the contrary, the creature suffereth it even with regret, because, as I have said, man loveth so strongly his egotism and dreadeth so much its destruction, that if God did not do it

cf. "The man who dwells in love is the man who lives consistently in accordance with the rule that there is no conflict between his own private good and the good of others, in the faith that the supreme purpose of the universe, the end which God has in view, is universal good, and who identifies himself with that great purpose. Such a man dwells in God, because by an act of faith he has been able to rise above the opposition between self and self, he has been able to reconcile egotism and altruism. He lives in the confidence that there is a final unity in which all persons are ultimately harmonised. By faith he has entered into the life of God."

D'Arcy, Idealism and Theology, p. 237.

Himself, and with authority, man would never consent to it.

A
Theoretical
Objection
and a
Practical
Answer.

To this it may be answered me, that God never taketh from man his liberty, and that thus he can always resist God; from,

whence it followeth that I ought not to say that God acteth like an absolute monarch, and without the consent of man. To show that this may be done, and yet the entire freedom and liberty of the will not be violated, I explain myself and say the freedom of the will implies right to surrender it;* it is used in its highest exercise when it is given up to God. It sufficeth then that man give a passive

* cf. Hegel: "*It is the nature or character of what we mean by person or subject to abolish its isolation or separateness. Morality, love, just mean the giving up of particularity or of the particular personality, and its extension to universality. . . . It is just this winning back of personality by being absorbed into the other which constitutes the true nature of personality.*"

consent, because that having given up himself to God at the beginning of his Christian course, that God might do with him and in him whatever He would, he gave then an active and general consent to whatever God should do. But when God destroyeth, burneth and purifieth, the soul seeth not that this is advantageous to it, but believeth rather the contrary; and even as the fire seemeth at first to soil the gold, so this operation seemeth to rob the soul of its purity. So that if an active and explicit consent were then needful, the soul would have difficulty to give it, and very often it would not give it at all. The most the soul doth is to keep itself in a passive consent, suffering as well as it can this operation, which it neither can nor will hinder.

The Action of the Soul is to keep Itself Passive.	Therefore God purifieth in such wise the soul from all its own operations, distinct, con- scious and manifold, which make a great
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severance between us and Him, so that in fine he renders it by little and little conformable to Himself, and then one with Himself; exalting the passive capacity of the creature, enlarging it, and ennobling though after a hidden and unknown manner, which is hence called mystical. But it is necessary that in all these operations the soul concur passively. It is true that, in the beginning before it cometh to this, it must be more active; and then, according as the divine operation groweth stronger, the soul must gradually and successively yield and give way unto God, until it be perfectly absorbed in Him. But this is a long while in coming to pass.

Progress
towards
Union We do not then say, as some have believed, that there is no need to pass through action; since, on the contrary, this is the very gate; but only that one must not always dwell there, seeing man ought to aim at the perfection of the end of his being, but he

can never arrive at it without quitting the first helps and means; which, though necessary to introduce him into this way, would greatly retard his progress, and if obstinately persisted in would hinder him from arriving at his end. This is what St. Paul did; *I leave, saith he, that which is behind, and I endeavour to advance forward, that so I may finish my course.**

Would not they say that a person had lost his senses if, having undertaken a journey, he should stop at the first inn because he was certainly informed that several have passed that way, that some have lodged there, and that the master of the house dwells there? All that we wish for then from souls in their progress is, that they go on still towards their end; that they take the shortest and easiest way; that they do not stop at the first place they come to; and that following the counsel of St. Paul, they leave

* *Phil. iii, 14.*

themselves to be moved by the Spirit of Grace, Who will conduct them to the end for which they were created, which is to enjoy God.

The
Beatific
Union

None can be ignorant, that the sovereign good is God; that essential beatitude consisteth in the union with God; that the saints are more or less glorified, according as this union is more or less perfect, and that this union cannot be made in the soul by any activity of its own; since God does not communicate Himself to the soul but in proportion as its passive capacity is great, noble, and enlarged. No one can be united to God without passiveness and simplicity; and this union being the beatitude itself, the way which conducts us into this passiveness cannot be evil; on the contrary, it is preferable to all other, and there is no risk in travelling by that way.

This way is in no wise dangerous; if

it were, would Jesus Christ have made it the most perfect and the most necessary of all ways? All can walk in it; and as all are called to blessedness, all are also called to enjoy God both in this life and in the next; forasmuch as the enjoyment of God constitutes our beatitude,—I say of God Himself, and not of His gifts, which could never make the essential beatitude, nor be capable of giving full contentment to the soul. For the soul is so noble and so great that all the gifts of God, even the greatest, could not render it happy, if God do not give Himself unto it. Now God's whole desire is to give Himself unto His creature, according to the capacity which He hath placed in it; and yet, alas! men are afraid to surrender themselves to God! They are afraid to possess Him, and to dispose themselves for the Divine Union.

Not unto us! Some say that none ought to put themselves into this union of themselves

I grant it. And I say also that no creature can ever do this, since there is not a creature in the world that is able to unite itself to God by all its own efforts; it must be God that must unite it to Himself. If therefore one cannot be united to God by oneself, it is to cry out against a chimera, to cry out against those who put themselves into this union of themselves.

These will say that some do feign themselves to be in it. I say that this cannot be feigned; for he who dieth of hunger cannot feign, especially for a long time, that he is in perfect satiety. There will escape from him always some desire, or longing, by which he will soon discover that he is very far from his consummation.

Since therefore no man can enter into his consummation, except he be placed therein, our concern here is not to introduce anyone into it, but to show them the way which leadeth thither; and at the same time to conjure them that

they do not keep themselves tied up, and fixed to any wayside halting-places, which must be quitted when the signal is given; which is known and understood by the experienced minister, who sheweth the living, water, and endeavoureth to introduce into it. And would it not be a cruelty that deserves to be punished, to show a spring to a thirsty man, but then to keep him bound and hinder him from going to it, leaving him to die of thirst? Yet this is what is usually done at this day. Let us all agree in the way, as we agree in the consummation, whereof none can doubt without error. The way hath its beginning, its progress, and its consummation or goal. The more one advanceth towards the goal, the more of necessity he departeth from the beginning; and it is impossible to arrive at the goal or end, but by departing continually farther from the beginning; no one being able to go from a gate to a distant place without passing through the intermediate

space. This is incontestable. If the end be good, holy, and necessary, and if the gate be good, how shall the way which cometh from this gate and leadeth directly to this end be evil? Oh the blindness of the most part of men, who value themselves for their learning and wit! Oh how true is it, my God, that *Thou hast hidden Thy secrets from the great and from the wise, to reveal them to the little ones!* *

Matt. xi, 25.

If the Editor's Preface had been written after, instead of before, the printing of this little book, it would have contained an acknowledgment of the kind offices of two friends—Mr. J. Rendel Harris, M.A., Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge; and Mr. J. Vernon Bartlet, M.A., Professor of Church History in Mansfield College, Oxford.

The Editor takes this opportunity of repairing that omission. The value of the notes has been considerably enhanced by suggestions and criticisms from both these friends.

NOTE ON THE WORD MYSTIC.

What the human soul all the world over needs is not to be harangued, however eloquently, about the old accepted religion, but to be permeated, charmed, taken captive by a warmer and more potent Breath of God than has ever been felt before.—John Pulsford.

IN translating "The Method of Prayer" the word "Spiritual" has been used whenever possible as a synonym for the word "Mystic." To use the words as interchangeable was Madame Guyon's own way and it has a certain advantage. Associations not altogether healthy and sane cling to the word mystic, and protest as one may, the associations remain. This is partly due to the aberrations of certain

mystics, but much more to the limitations of the ordinary Christian experience, and consequently of the average Christian consciousness.

We find it hard to recognise as genuine and God-inspired, religious experiences through which we have not passed, expressed in language which is unfamiliar, and often so out of the ordinary as to appear open to the criticism of common sense. Up to the level of the average conventional religious experience men easily recognise as genuine, and sympathise with, an account of the parallel experience of others; but when such accounts rise beyond that level, experiences of the life of the spirit are apt to be discounted as the dreams of visionaries and enthusiasts. If—as always happens—there are some faults of manner, of expression, or of conduct on which the critic can lay hold, these are made into arguments to disprove the validity and reality of the experience. In this way we justify to ourselves the

refusal to increase our knowledge by the ideas which might be communicated through the experience of others.

This is, in truth, thoroughly unscientific. The attempt to deny validity to all but our limited experience of the Unseen Things, is the last ditch of the old dogmatism in religion. When the scientific spirit has once come into full possession in the religious world, the theologian will classify the phases of the religious consciousness, both in and out of the Bible, as a scientific man classifies the phenomena of his science, before he attempts to dogmatise about them.

As soon as this is attempted it becomes evident that mysticism, apart from its aberrations, is a true, permanent and legitimate phase of the Christian consciousness. It is one of the four main types which the Christian life has tended to assume from the first days;—the ethical where the stress falls upon conduct; the traditional and ecclesiastical where the stress

falls on the inheritance of the religion of the past; the mystical which lives upon a present experience of the spiritual realities revealed to faith; and the theological which endeavours "to justify the ways of God to men" by reducing them to a reasoned system. All these have their roots in the New Testament and may be said to be represented, though not in any exclusive sense, by James, the author of the Epistle of that name; Peter, to whom the great miracle of grace is not that God saves a sinner but that He saves a centurion who is outside the covenanted mercies; John the father of all Christian mystics; and Paul who represents almost all phases of the Christian consciousness in turn, yet is governed by the necessity which he feels of articulating them into a theological system, or a perfect theodicy.

It was within the original purpose of this note to trace the historical continuity of the Johannine experience in the Chris-

tian Church down to our time, through Origen, Augustine, John Scotus Erigena, S. Bernard, Bonaventura, Eckhart, Tauler, Pico della Mirandola, the author of the "Theologia Germanica," à Kempis, S. Teresa, S. John of the Cross, Francis de Sales, Behmen, the Cambridge Platonists, Madame Guyon, Fénelon, Norris of Bemerton, William Law, the English Friends, and some of the modern representatives of the Keswick School who illustrate many of the original characteristics of the mystics.* But a great part of this work has been done in a small and easily accessible book by the daughter of the Dean of S. Paul's, which has recently been published. As the treatment possible here could not be more detailed than in that essay it seems better simply to refer the reader to it.†

* *The best individual representative of the mystic family in our own time was the late Dr. John Pulsford, author of "Quiet Hours."*

† *Introduction to Christian Mysticism by Elizabeth Gregory, published by H. R. Allenson.*

Many of the main features of the whole family of Christian Mystics re-appear like family traits in generation after generation, in Spain and in Germany, at one time in Roman Catholic France, at another in Protestant England. Miss Gregory singles out six main notes of the mystical experience, which may be stated thus;—

1. Self-surrender, and life through death to self.
2. "Christ in us; we in Christ,"
[These are the watchwords by which the mystic expresses the substitution of the filial personality for the egoistic—the life which is sonlike towards God, in place of the life which centres in self.]
3. The three stages of the Divine life in man, purification, illumination, and union with God in Christ.
4. Symbolism, or the spiritual glowing through the natural life.
5. The conviction that the ideal is more real than the so-called real;

and the consequent endeavour to transform the real.

6. Visions, and the endeavour to interpret the unseen life through them.

In all the Christian mystics we find a tender and most lovable piety, and in almost all, some at least of the following features; an endeavour to express the experiences of the soul in great richness of metaphor; a tendency to find analogies (often strained and pressed too far) in the operations of nature and of grace; an attitude towards God so submissive that it seems abject, until we can get the clue to its meaning in the satisfaction which comes through the death of an old self, and observe that the so-called "death" is really the re-birth of a new self in other and enlarged relations; the duty and blessedness of turning from the outer to the inner life; the doctrine of the Cross as an experience reproduced in the Christian life; the Christian's pure and disinterested love to God; rest in God as the highest blessing;

the blessedness of silent waiting and watching; union with God in Christ as the goal of the Christian life here.

Many of the common charges against Mysticism are not borne out by an examination of the writings of the mystics. It is often said that the mystic seeks union with God independently of Christ. That may be true of non-Christian mystics like Maeterlinck, but it is manifestly untrue of the Christian mystics as a family. It is vital to the understanding of Christian Mysticism to see that the mystic finds his union with God through identification with Christ by faith, and that through this comes the transformation of his own consciousness, until the sense of his filial relation to God gradually becomes the most substantial and formative element in it.

The mystics have generally been persecuted and discredited by churches which are wedded to an inflexible ritual and an authoritative organisation; but this will hardly be reckoned a serious charge

against them by any one who understands that "the spirit bloweth where it listeth." If a Christian Church does not leave room for the stirring of the waters by the Spirit of Life, so much the worse for the Church.

The fear of striving to

"wind ourselves too high

For mortal man beneath the sky,"

which prevents many from even trying to understand Mysticism is a fear which harasses the stragglers rather than the leaders of the human host. It seems to have troubled the author of Ecclesiastes,* who nevertheless does not seem to have been in special danger of erring on that side; but we find no trace of it in Jesus Christ† or in His great interpreters. In fact there is safety in the atmosphere of the heights, and nearer to God is nearer to humility and law and obedience. The

* "*Be not righteous overmuch,*"—*Eccles. vii, 16.*

† "*Ye therefore shall be perfect even as your heavenly father is perfect.*"—*S. Matt. v, 48.*

perception of Holiness and of human sinfulness proceed *pari passu*.

The danger of an isolated, self-sufficient, individualistic, and therefore unfruitful life, is historically the chief peril of Mysticism. But it is more than probable that this would have been avoided had Mysticism ever been fully developed. A true Christian Mysticism cannot stop short of the mystery of the corporate life of Christ in his Church. The solidarity of mankind, the communion of saints, the invisible relations of souls which are discovered in prayer, are all of them truths which lie along the path of the mystic; and when his mysticism has gone far enough, it inevitably prohibits isolation and leads him back to live in the lives of others.

Enough has already been said to make it clear that there is a place, as yet somewhat grudgingly recognised, but a legitimate place, among the phases of the Christian life for a correlated and perfected Christian Mysticism. It is no part

of the Christian Gospel that we can only know God at second hand, in formulated doctrines and reported facts, any more than it is part of our education to discover that we cannot know ourselves except from what we learn in books. Science has a great deal to teach us about ourselves which is very important and necessary; but if we had not an earlier and more immediate knowledge of ourselves, Science could teach us nothing at all. Our knowledge of God is meant to be as immediate, experimental, and fundamental as our knowledge of ourselves. Only as it is so do the doctrines of the Christian Faith come to life and take their natural content. Without the experimental knowledge of the Spiritual Life which the mystics have the supreme dogmas of the Christian faith, are mere intellectual formulae, and some of the simplest parables of the Gospel, such as the Vine and its Branches, are empty words. A child can breathe, but it takes a man of much learning to

explain the process in all its bearings. The mystic is a child breathing the breath of the divine life. He may do practically what the scientific theologian studies a life-time to explain. Or the case might be put in this way; a creed should be an outline map of that vast tract of life which can only be spiritually discerned; and it is useful to have such a map if we are travelling in that country, but we cannot get to know the country by merely studying the map, or indeed in any way except by travelling in it.

To say that Christianity is a historical religion, as many are now doing is true, but it is the half truth which is perilous. The Christian religion is all historical and all spiritual or mystical; that is, it is the history of practical mystics in every generation. To deal with the history minus the mysticism, is to miss the clue to understanding it. It is to deal with effects and to miss the causes. The effects are

seen in the sphere of visible history; the causes lie in a soul's relations to God.

There is a deep saying of Professor Bradley's to the effect that "to love unsatisfied, the world is a mystery; a mystery which love satisfied seems to comprehend. The latter is wrong only because it cannot be content without thinking itself right." A closely parallel epigram might describe the truth and the peril of mysticism. To the mystic the ultimate mysteries of the Christian faith seem to have come within experience and comprehension. He is wrong only because he cannot be content without thinking that he alone is right. To interpret his experience rightly, he will have to accept allies whom he has always shunned, the theologian and the historian, and even the despised philosopher.

The failure of mysticism to win wider and more adequate recognition is probably due to a defect which seems unavoidable in its present limitations. It is not the

fault of the mystics; their intentions are irreproachable, the facts to which they witness are verifiable, and are verified in every generation by hundreds of devout and saintly men and women. But an inevitable breakdown comes when the mystic has to put his experience into mere words. It is not only fancies which break

"through language and escape."

We have not yet got much further in providing a language of the spirit, than those who in the first century spoke "with tongues."

Something might be done by showing that the essential experiences of the mystics come within the familiar categories of the New Testament, and indeed in many cases illustrate the substantial content of those categories. For "entrance into the perfect state" read "entrance to the Kingdom of God" or "the establishment of the Kingdom of God within;" for "pure and disinterested love" read

"filial responsiveness" or "the spirit of the Son which cries Abba, Father!" For "the passive state" read "receptivity;" for "holy indifference" read the "peace of God which is better than understanding;" for "surrender of individuality" substitute "surrender of the egoism of the ego and the selfishness of self," and so make it equivalent to that life-losing which is life-finding; for "union with God" read S. John's "eternal life." It would then become clear that Christian experiences of the kind which underlie the writings of Madame Guyon and Fénelon are implied at every turn in the New Testament.

There is room for a new commentary which should treat the Scriptures inductively, setting side by side with the original types of the Christian consciousness found in the New Testament, sayings, experiences, and autobiographical records from the lives of the mystics, which are sufficiently akin to illustrate and verify those types. As long ago as the

fifteenth century the famous Jean Gerson of the Sorbonne had some such plan, and was only prevented from carrying it out by his long effort at Constance to reform the Church of Rome from within.

The plea for the mystic then is not that he is the sole representative of the Christian life,—for the Christian life may be lived in many keys. One man finds in it a compelling reforming energy; another finds in it the supreme discipline of the human reason; another feels it to be a hallowed link with the home whence the soul came in some remote past; others find in it the poetry of life, the consecration of tradition, or the miraculous saving power which slays sin and creates holiness; it gives the ideal of a perfect social order, or supplies the dynamic of redemption. But the mystic also has his own interpretation of the facts; he has discovered through Christ that he has relations with an invisible but real life

where God is all and in all, and he develops an organ for correspondence with that world in prayer. From that time, however busy his hands or his head may be, his inner life is hid with Christ in God; he deals immediately with the eternal spiritual verities, and his soul is restful with the consciousness of an exiled son who has returned to his Father's house. He claims to be recognised as a member of the Christian household equally with the theologian, the reformer, and the evangelist. He does not displace them, but he does supplement them. As Pico della Mirandola put it long ago, "philosophy seeks the truth, theology finds it, religion possesses it."*

They may explain the truth, the mystic breathes it, lives by it; by the experience

* Compare also "*Theologia Mystica est sapientia experimentalis, Dei affectione divinitus infusa, quae mentem ab omni inordinatione puram, per actus supernaturales fidei, spei, et charitatis, cum Deo intime conjungit.*" This might be freely paraphrased thus:

of faith some of the contents of "the truth" have passed into his consciousness. By faith things not seen have become to him things that are; the unseen is more than the seen; the spiritual glows through the material; life throbs with the pulses of a Divine love.

"Mystic Theology is an experimental religious knowledge divinely quickened in men by the inspiration of God, which unites in intimate fellowship with God a mind free from every disordering desire, through supernatural (or spiritual) acts of faith, hope, and love." This is a remarkable attempt to describe what is notoriously difficult to define; it falls short only in that it fails to give to Christ His true place. The God who is known through spiritual acts of faith, hope, and love is the God Who dwells in Christ in His fulness and grace. The reference for this quotation is only given by Overton as follows: Isagoge Balthasaris Corderii Soc. Jesu Theologi ad Mysticam Theologiam S. Dionysii Areopagitæ. " "

MADAME GUYON'S HEREDITY.

MADAME GUYON'S autobiography gives the following account of the beginning of her life: "I was born, as I have been told, on Easter Eve, the 13th of April, 1668, but not baptized till the 24th of May, for the reasons which follow. My parents made a very high profession of piety, especially my father, who inherited it from his ancestors; for in his family they reckoned almost as many saints as persons who composed it. I was born before the due time; for my mother, from a terrible fright was delivered of me in the eighth month; at which time, they say, 'tis

almost impossible for a child to live. I had no sooner received life than I had like to have lost it, and to die without baptism."

This reference to her father is unfortunately meagre though quite consistent with the purpose of the autobiography; for the author's aim in writing was not to give an account of matters personal to herself, but in accordance with the order of her spiritual director, to set forth the experiences in which she felt that the Spirit of God had been dealing with her. But the reference though meagre is significant. There were not many families of which it could be recorded that "they reckoned almost as many saints as persons who composed it." It is possible that with the help of some other clues, the stock of which Madame Guyon came may be sufficiently identified to make her life a very interesting instance of the transmission of subtle religious susceptibilities, of that spiritual heredity which consists

in receiving a native affinity for fellowship with the Unseen.

A great deal of the religious and intellectual interest of the seventeenth century in France centres round the name of the Arnaulds. The history of Port Royal, and all its hopeful movements and reforming energies in education and religion, is for nearly a century the history of the Arnauld family. The founder of the family, when it emerges into public life, was Antoine de la Mothe Arnauld, Procureur General to Catherine de Medicis. He was a Huguenot, but was either too eminent or too diplomatic to be overthrown in the general persecution which overwhelmed others who shared his faith. He had eight sons, every one of whom achieved distinction in the service of his country. The second son, Antoine Arnauld, left the deepest mark on its history. He married the daughter of M. Marion, afterwards Avocat General, and it was from their large family (they had

twenty children, of whom ten survived) that the Arnaulds of Port Royal came. The eldest son inherited a name which gives him a special interest for us. He was Jean de la Mothe, a soldier and traveller who served Henri IV. against the League with chivalric bravery and devotion, and finally fell a victim to a feud which, in the discharge of military duty, he had contracted with the house of La Rochefoucauld. He died in 1592. Among the inheritors of his name appears to be Jeanne Marie Bouvières de la Mothe, afterwards Madame Guyon.

Both of the christian names borne by Madame Guyon were also borne by members of Antoine Arnauld's family. The daughter who became famous as La Mère Angélique was Jacqueline *Marie*, and the daughter who became La Mère Agnes, and was also in turn Abbess of Port Royal, was *Jeanne Catherine*. It is almost literally true of this generation of the Arnaulds that there were "as many saints

as persons who composed it." Three of the younger sisters identified themselves as soon as they could with the devotional life at Port Royal. An elder daughter, Catherine, after bravely facing for many years the trials of an unhappy married life, ended her days in peace at Port Royal. The eldest son, Robert Arnauld d'Andilly, threw up a brilliant career in the Parliament to become the friend, guardian, and helper of the Port Royalists. Henri became Bishop of Angers, and Antoine was the famous doctor of the Sorbonne, who spent his life in defending the "doctrines of Grace" as taught by Jansen, hiding from Jesuit plots, and unearthing Jesuit heresies. Of the children of Robert d'Andilly and Catherine le Maître in the next generation, eight entered Port Royal, one became Abbé de Chaumes, and one was Simon Marquis de Pomponne, Minister of Louis XIV.

No record of the children or descendants of Jeanne de la Mothe, the eldest son of

the founder of the Parliamentary family, seems available to enable us to trace the exact connection with Jeanne Marie Bouvières de la Mothe two generations later, if such connection exist; but the similarity of name, the distinct bent of natural temperament, and the words of Madame Guyon make it probable that the link is there.

Another link with the Port Royalists is made by a name which frequently recurs in Madame Guyon's Autobiography. When she left Paris in 1681 on her adventurous journey to take up the mission to which she felt called in the diocese of Geneva, she was accompanied by a certain Sister Garnier, two domestics, and her own daughter. It was on this occasion that the picturesque incident of the child covering her mother with three hundred rush crosses took place. Sister Garnier was aged and infirm, though she had still "a good share both of grace and natural understanding," and was Superior of a Convent of New

Catholics at Paris. It seems that she and Madame Guyon had been on the verge of a contract to unite their fortunes and endeavours in the new mission for the conversion of Geneva to Catholicism, but failing to come to a final agreement, had agreed to work in neighbouring spheres. Seventy years earlier the first novice received into Port Royal des Champs by La Mère Angélique had been a Sister Anne Gertrude Garnier, who, when the struggle for reform began, stood by the Abbess almost alone against the reluctant sisterhood.*

It may reasonably be asked, "Why if a connection existed between Madame Guyon and the Arnaulds did she not make the most of it?" In addition to her unwillingness to dilate on matters purely personal to herself, no doubt her special sensitiveness to the suspicion of heresy would operate to make her suppress any mention of the Arnaulds. By the time

* *Beard's Port Royal*, vol. I, p. 47.

she had become well-known Port Royal was sinking under a weight of calumny, suspicion, and persecution. Her own religious testimony rested on personal experience, that of the Port Royalists had been a system of faith. Their theology was not hers, but they had been convicted in the popular judgment of some of the heresies of which she was accused; so that she had everything to gain from saying as little as possible to identify herself with those who may have been of her own stock. But the desire to suppress anything like pride in family connections is sufficient to account for her silence. It is part of her regular practice in the Autobiography to refer to persons, especially if they bear distinguished names, only by an initial letter, or in some oblique fashion. There are very few autobiographies where the endeavour to make the whole an account of the dealings of the Spirit of God with a human soul and nothing besides, is so consistently carried out.

We are told very little about her mother who seems to have been not otherwise in her treatment of her daughter. One happy memory is preserved, "No poor person was ever sent away by my mother, nor did any destitute one ever apply to her without receiving help. She furnished poor artisans with the means of carrying on their work, and poor traders with the means of supplying their shops. I think it is from her I have inherited charity, and the love of the poor, for God gave me grace to succeed her in this holy exercise."

It is worth while to bear in mind even slight facts of the kind indicated in these references to Madame Guyon's parents, because they fall into place alongside many others of a like nature. Although character cannot be transmitted, susceptibilities often are. What Madame Guyon would call a "strong propension towards God" often appears in successive generations in a family. The exceptional susceptibility to

religious influences, and the vividness of vision into the spiritual realities which characterise Madame Guyon, are something more than the endowment of normal human nature; they represent on their natural side the heightening of faculty which comes with heredity, and which is most naturally explained as the effect of a parent's prayers.

ORIGIN AND INFLUENCE OF
"THE METHOD OF PRAYER."

"Ita libenter devotos et simplices
libros legere debemus, sicut altos et
profundos,"—de *Imitatione Christi*,
Cap. V., Sec. 1.

IN the autumn of 1684 Madame Guyon set out from Turin to return to France. On her way she was persuaded—led like a child she says—to make a stay at Grenoble. The rest may be told almost entirely in extracts from her own autobiography.*

"I placed my daughter in a convent

* *With many digressions Chapters xvii—xxii in Part II. give an account of the events at Grenoble from which these extracts are taken.*

and resolved to employ all this time in resigning myself to be possessed in solitude by Him Who is the Absolute Sovereign of my soul. I made not any visit in this place;—no more had I in any of the others where I had sojourned. But I was greatly surprised when, a few days after my arrival, there came to see me several persons who made profession of a singular devotion to God. I perceived immediately a gift which He had given me, both of discerning spirits and of administering to each that which suited their states. I felt myself invested all on a sudden with the apostolic state, and discerned the conditions of the souls of such persons as spoke to me, and that with so much facility that they were surprised at it, and said one to another 'that I gave every one of them the very thing they had stood in need of.' [It was Thou O God Who didst all these things!] Some of them sent others to me. It came to such an excess that generally from six in the morning till

eight in the evening I was taken up in speaking of God.

"People flocked from all parts, far and near; friars, priests, men of the world, maids, wives, widows, all came one after another; and God supplied me with what was pertinent and satisfying to them all, after a wonderful manner, without any share of study or meditation thereon on my part.

"Here, O my God, Thou madest an infinite number of conquests known to Thyself only. They were forthwith furnished with a wonderful facility of prayer. God conferred on them His grace plentifully, and wrought marvellous changes in them. The most advanced of these souls found, when with me, in silence, a grace communicated to them which they could neither comprehend nor cease to admire. The others found an unction in my words, and that they effected in them what I said to them. They said, 'they had never experienced anything like it,'

Men of different orders, and priests of merit came to see me, to whom our Lord granted very great favours, as indeed He did to all, without exception, who came in sincerity.

One thing was surprising, and that was that I had not a word to say to such as came only to watch my words, and to criticise them. Even when I thought to try to speak to them, I felt that I could not, and that God would not have me do it. Some of them in return said: 'The people are fools to go and see that lady, she cannot speak.' Others of them treated me as if I were only a stupid simpleton. After they left me there came one and said:—

'I could not get hither soon enough to apprise you not to speak to those persons; they come from so-and-so, to try what they can catch from you to your disadvantage.'

I answered:—

'Our Lord has prevented your charity;

for I was not able to say one word to them.'

I felt that what I spoke flowed from the fountain, and that I was only the instrument of Him Who made me speak. Amidst this general applause our Lord made me comprehend what the apostolic state was, with which He had honoured me; that to give one's self up to the help of souls, in the purity of His Spirit, was to expose oneself to the most cruel persecutions. These very words were imprinted on my heart - 'to resign oneself to serve our neighbour is to sacrifice oneself to a gibbet.' Such as now proclaim, 'Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord,' will soon cry out, 'Away! away! crucify,'"

* * * * *

Amongst others who came to Madame Guyon at this time was a Brother who came for a charitable collection. "We entered into conversation which revived in him the love he had for God, which

he acknowledged had been too much stifled by his great occupations. I made him comprehend that there was not any occupation which should hinder him from loving God and from being occupied within himself. Our Lord conferred on him many favours, and gave him to be one of my true children.

* * * * *

"This good brother had occasion to bring to me some of his companions; and God took hold of them all. It was at the very time that God gave me these good Religious, that the others of the same order were . . . opposing with all their might the Holy Spirit of God. I could not but admire to see how God was pleased to make Himself amends for former damages, by the pouring out of His Spirit in abundance on these good friars, while the others were labouring vehemently against it, doing all they could to destroy its dominion and efficacy in their fellow mortals,

"The Superior and the Master of the novices of the house in which the good brother was, declared against me, without knowing me; and were grievously chagrined that a woman, as they said, should be so much flocked about, and so much sought after. For looking at the things as they were in themselves, and not as they were in God, Who does whatever pleases Him, they had nothing but contempt for the gift which was lodged in so mean an instrument; instead of only esteeming God and His grace, without looking at the meanness of the subject in which He sheds it.

"Yet this good brother brought it about that his Superior came at last to see me, and to thank me for the charities which he said I had done them. Our Lord so ordered it that he found something in my conversation which reached and took hold of him. At length he was completely gained and brought over.

"There were many novices in the noviciate. The eldest of them grew so uneasy under his vocation that he knew not what to do. So great was his trouble that he could neither read, study, pray, nor do scarce any of his duties. The collector, his companion, was moved to bring him to me. We spoke awhile together, and the Lord discovered to me both the cause of his disorder and its remedy. I told it him; and he began to practise prayer, and that the prayer of the heart. He was on a sudden wonderfully changed, and the Lord highly favoured him. As I spoke to him grace wrought in his heart, and his soul drank it in, as the parched ground does the gentle rain. He felt himself quit of his pain before he left the room. He then readily, with joy and even with perfection, performed all the exercises, which before he did with reluctance and disgust. He now both studied and prayed easily, and discharged all his duties in such a manner

that he was scarce known to himself or others.

What astonished him most was a spring of life which remained with him, and a gift of prayer. He saw that there was now given him what he could never have before, whatever pains he took for it. And this enlivening spring was what made him act, gave him grace for his employments, and an inward fruition of the presence of God, which brought all good with it. He gradually brought me all the novices, all of whom partook of the effects of grace, though differently according to their different degrees. Never was there a more flourishing noviciate.

"The Master and the Superior could not forbear admiring so great a change in their novices, though they penetrated not to the cause of it. One day, as they were speaking of it to the collector—for they esteemed him highly on account of his merits and virtues—and were telling him how they were surprised at the

change in the novices, and the blessing the Lord had bestowed on the noviciate, he said to them:—

'My fathers, if you will permit me, I will tell you the reason of it. It is the lady against whom ye have exclaimed so much, without knowing her, whom God has made use of for all this.'

They were very much surprised; and both the Master, though advanced in age, and the Superior, *then submitted humbly to practise prayer, after the manner taught by a little book, which the Lord inspired me to write, and of which I shall say more hereafter.*

Such benefit they received from it, that the Superior said to me:—

'I am become quite a new man. I could before no longer practise prayer, because my reasoning faculty was grown dull and exhausted; but now I do it as often as I will, with ease, with much fruit, and a quite different sense of the presence of God.'

And the Master said:—

'These forty years I have been a Religious, and can say that I never knew how to pray, nor have I ever known or tasted of God as I have done since I read that little book. . . . "'

This then is the origin of the book, set forth in a way which is entirely confirmed by its contents. It is a book of experimental religion—what some one has called "clinical theology." It has no thesis to prove, no party to serve, no doctrinal system to plead for. It is a book for inquirers written by an expert in the spiritual life, setting forth as barely and simply as possible, a way by which the soul may "acquaint itself with God and be at peace." It has the limitations suggested by its origin. It was to be used within the high walls of a monastery; but the walls of a monastery do not shut out heaven, and in Madame Guyon's method heaven had been found outside the monastery first.

The book soon proved that it had in it the very unusual quality of producing in the reader some likeness at least of the state of mind in which it was written. How it came to be printed and to become disastrously famous for Madame Guyon may briefly be told;—

"There came to see me a Counsellor of the parliament, a servant of God, who finding on my table the 'Method of Prayer,' which I had written, desired me to lend it him. Having read it and liked it much, he lent it to some of his friends, to whom he thought it might be of service. Every one of them wanted copies of it. He resolved with the good brother to get it printed. The impression was begun and the approbations given to it. They desired me to write a preface to it. I did so; and thus was the little book printed. This Counsellor was one of my intimate friends and a pattern of piety.

"The book has already passed through five or six editions; and our Lord has

given a very great benediction to it. These good friars took fifteen hundred of them. The devil became so enraged against me on account of the conquests God made by me, that I was assured he was going to stir up against me a violent persecution. All that gave me no trouble. Let him stir up against me ever so strange persecutions, I know they will all serve to the glory of my God."

* * * * *

When Madame Guyon reached Marseilles she found that the book had preceded her, and had become to some a "light to lighten," and to others "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." This was its singular fate. It went rapidly from hand to hand, and everywhere made converts or persecutors, lovers or haters.

She tells an amusing story of an encounter in Paris with Peter Nicole, the friend and associate of Antoine Arnauld of Port Royal. "An acquaintance of mine, an intimate friend also of Monsieur Nicole,

had often heard him speak against me. This person thought that it would not be difficult to remove the objections of Nicole, if we could be made personally acquainted, and have opportunities of conversation. He thought this important because many had received their impressions from him. Accordingly, although with some reluctance on my part, we met.

"After some little conversation he referred to my book, entitled 'The Short and Easy Method of Prayer,' and made the remark that it was full of errors. I proposed that we should read the book together; and I desired him to tell me frankly those things in the book which seemed objectionable; expressing the hope, at the same time, that I might be able to meet and answer them. He expressed himself well satisfied, and accordingly we read the book through together with much attention.

"After we had read it partly through, I asked him to specify his objections; but he replied that, so far, he had none.

After we had completed the book, I repeated the question.

'Madame,' said Nicole, 'I find that my talent is in writing, and not precisely in personal discussion of this kind. If you have no objections, I will refer you to a learned and good friend of mine, Monsieur Boileau. He will be able to indicate the imperfections of the book; and perhaps you will be able to profit by his suggestions.'"

A few days afterwards M. Boileau, a brother of the poet and satirist, came to see her. "He introduced the subject of my little book on prayer. I told him the state of mind in which I wrote it. He remarked that he was entirely persuaded of the sincerity of my intentions, but he said that the book was liable to fall into the hands of some who might misapply it. I asked him as a favour to point out the passages in it which caused this anxiety. Accordingly we looked over the book together, and when he came to

such passages, I gave explanations which seemed to satisfy him.

When we had finished, he said, 'Madame, all that is wanted is a little more in the way of explanation.'

And he pressed me very much to write something additional and explanatory, which I agreed to do. A few days after, I completed what he wished me to write and sent it to him for examination; and he seemed to be well satisfied. I revised it once or twice, and he urged me much to print it."

This explanation was published as a "Courte Apologie du Moïen court et très-facile de faire Oraïson." The Apology is contained in the volume of "Opuscules Spirituelles" published at Cologne in 1720.

Unfortunately for Madame Guyon her book became a *casus belli* between the rival and competing religious parties represented by Bossuet and Fénelon. Fénelon stood for the "new spirituality," as it was called, which took for its vocation the

culture of the inward life by methods of prayer and devotion. Bossuet was the representative of traditional orthodoxy, and authoritative theology. It gradually became clear that the two men were drifting into open conflict, and that the immediate occasion was the question whether the teaching in Madame Guyon's book was heretical. Madame Guyon welcomed a full examination by Bossuet; and he admits the singular effectiveness of her writings, "He declared to the Duc de Chevreuse that while examining her writings for the first time, he was astonished by a light and unction he had never before seen, and for three days was made to realise the Divine Presence in a manner altogether new.*

But in spite of the appearance of a fair trial, the case was prejudiced and its conclusion inevitable. Bossuet found in the book "much that was intolerable as well

* "*Hours with The Mystics.*" Vaughan. *One* . . . *Ed.*, p. 252.

in matter as in form" and one positive heresy—that the perfect could not pray for "graces for themselves, because being wholly in God's hand their state is His concern rather than their own." The author maintained, for instance, that she could no longer ask for the forgiveness of her sins; to do so would be to fail in absolute abandonment and disinterestedness, as she had already been fully forgiven.

Madame Guyon's real offence was not what she had written, but that she—a woman and unauthorised—was exercising a potent religious influence over the minds and hearts of eminent leaders in Parisian society. As might be expected the gentle-spirited prophetess of the inward life was no match for the truculent and overbearing theologian, and she was soon at his mercy. In the nineteenth century, and in England, Madame Guyon would have gone to Keswick and become the "happy mother-in-God of many souls." In the seventeenth century, in France,

there was nowhere for her but the Bastille.

On December 27th, 1695, Madame Guyon was arrested and sent to the Castle of Vincennes. It was during this imprisonment of eight months that many of her hymns were composed. Her maid learned them by heart as fast as her mistress composed them, and they sang them together. The keynote is given in this simple lyric:—

A little bird am I,
Shut from the fields of air,
And in my cage I sit and sing
To Him Who placed me there;
Well pleased a prisoner to be,
Because, my God, it pleases Thee.

She was liberated through the influence of her friends, and remained at liberty till 1698. In September of that year she was again arrested, and sent to the Bastille, which was then full of prisoners for the faith. There she remained for four years, during which time she lost the maid who had been for half her lifetime her friend and comrade.

The controversy in which her name was involved had now become a conflagration as far as passion could make it so. It was waged as such controversies usually are, by misrepresentation, innuendo, intrigue, and falsehood. There was an appeal to Rome, and the quarrel became involved in the high politics of the Papal court. It linked with other and more ancient hostilities the hatred of Jesuit for Jansenist, and of Gallican for Ultramontanist. While the conflict waged Madame Guyon lay in prison.

In 1702 she was set free; but her constitution was broken by the terrible experiences of her sojourn in the Bastille, and she never recovered physical health. She died in 1717, having already for many years had full enjoyment of the peace "which is better than understanding."

Although the author was at rest, her little book, in virtue of its fidelity to the soul's experience, for which Ewald calls it the "abstract and essence of the true pure

mysticism,"* was destined to be read, translated, and discussed, in many places, and usually with some traceable effect. Mr. Rendel Harris has pointed out that the Method of Prayer in the Bristol translation, together with Madame Guyon's Autobiography, are among the causes which transformed militant Quakerism into Quietism. Alongside the testimony of the first readers may be put Mr. Harris' own reference to the author as "the teacher from whom I have received more help and guidance in the things of God than from any other person."† The natural development which was denied to her principles and teaching in France has partially taken place in England. There are some who claim with thanksgiving, and some who complain with lamentation, that she may be regarded as the Mother-

* Ewald. *Briefe über die alte Mystik und den neuen Mysticismus* p. 176. *Sie sind der Inbegriff und Grundriss der echten reinen Mystik.*

† "London Quarterly," 1899, p. 313.

in God of the great Society of Friends. Each judges after his kind; and it is not given to every one to relish Madame Guyon. It may be that she has not yet come to her own, as she may do.

The best short account of Madame Guyon's life is in Vaughan's "Hours with the Mystics." In a recently published book, "François de Fénelon" by Viscount St. Cyres, there is an admirable résumé of the controversy between Bossuet and Fénelon, and the share which Madame Guyon's books had in that controversy. The longest and most elaborate account of her life is Upham's,* but the author has a procrustean measure of theological orthodoxy, and the true outlines of Madame Guyon's character and teaching are mutilated in making them fit his measure.

* *Life of Madame Guyon*, by T. C. Upham; Sampson Low, Son & Co., 1862.

Her autobiography, has been recently translated and edited, in two volumes, by T. Taylor Allen,* and there is an American edition published by Edward Jones, of New York.† The "Method of Prayer" and "Spiritual Torrents" have been translated by Miss Marston. We get the clearest sight of what she was, both on the side of her spiritual strength, and her intense femininity from her own transparent writings. They are almost a transcript of the slightly inconsequent talk of a clever woman, as far as their outward form is concerned; all the more because they lack the severity and restraint of literature they are full of self revelation.

* *Autobiography of Madame Guyon by T. Taylor Allen: Kegan Paul, Trench, Tribüner & Co., 1898.*

† *Autobiography of Madame Guyon: Edward Jones, New York, 1880.*

THE WORD "PARFAIT," AND THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

THE sense in which the word "perfect" or "perfection" can be used in speaking of the Christian life has long been a debateable point. The general sense of the word may be gathered inductively from its use in the New Testament. It is usually a mistake to attempt to define closely the meaning of a word at the time when it is still fluid. But the following illustrations will show how the word fluctuates between (1) a conscious relationship established between man and God, and (2) the character fully expressing, and conforming to, that relationship.

1. "If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." (Matthew xix, 21.) Here the word is *Teleíos*, meaning entire, complete, full-grown, or fully accomplished.
2. "Howbeit we speak wisdom amongst the perfect" (*Teleíos*). (I. Corinthians, ii, 6.) Here the word has almost a technical meaning, referring to those who are initiated into the mysteries of a religion.
3. "Till we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a *perfect* man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Ephesians iv, 13.) In this case *teleíos* denotes completed, rounded manhood; after the type of the fulfilled humanity seen in Christ.
4. Epaphras . . . saluteth you, always striving for you in his

prayers, that ye may stand *perfect* and fully assured in all the will of God. Colossians iv, 12. The word *teleíos* evidently stands in this case for a true and developed relation to God.

5. "Can the blind guide the blind? Shall they not both fall into a pit? The disciple is not above his master, but everyone when he is perfected shall be as his master," Luke vi, 39, 40. Here the word used (*Katērtismenos*) has the sense of "furnished completely," *i.e.* supplied with all the faculties for forming true judgments.

6.—The same idea is present in the injunction, "Be perfected" (II. Corinthians xiii, 11) in the sense of — "complete your adjustment into a harmonious fellowship with God and one another."

7. "That the man of God may be perfect, furnished completely unto

every good work," II. Timothy iii, 17. Here both "perfect" (R.V. "complete") and "furnished completely," are forms containing the same root ideas,—fulfilment of function and capacity.

8. "The God of peace make you perfect in every good thing to do His will," (Hebrews xiii, 21). The verb here used is the one which gives *Katērtismenos*, and covers *all that is necessary for complete Christian activity.*"
9. In Philippians iii, 12, both ideas are found. "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made *perfect*, but I press on if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Jesus Christ." It is the full and mature Christian consciousness (the meaning of "perfect" in v. 15) of the Apostle which compels him to see how much remains yet to be

attained in the sphere of character and conduct.

Madame Guyon's expression "prayer is the key of 'perfectness'" shows an exact appreciation of the double aspect of the word as referring to the development of character into conformity with an established relation. There is in human nature a permanent possibility of entering into conscious relations with God. It is man's glory to be "*capax Dei*." By faith in Jesus Christ the possibility is turned into an actuality; and the life which has come into the new relationship develops a sensibility corresponding to its new environment. It acquires a facility for seeing or feeling things as they are in relation to God—*sub specie aeternitatis*. The habitual regard of all things as they are when seen in the suffused glow of a spiritual presence "far more deeply interfused," throbbing with the life of love and hope, and purpose, as they must be in a redeemed creation, amounts almost to

an added faculty or sense, like the sense of beauty in form, colour, or sound.

When the habit of seeing things as they are in the light of the Eternal Spirit has once been formed, human nature has taken a step upward. It is "perfect" not in the sense that it has reached a final goal; but in the sense that a higher life—the life of the spirit—has begun; this new life is at once the consummation of the old, and the beginning of the new, like the seed which is formed in the blossom of the plant.

The new relation is final in the sense that no other and higher can be added after it. It is the completing, all inclusive, satisfactory, relation of life. In all others there is an element of unrest, of seeking for something beyond. The innate impulse which drives a man on to realise himself, first in a simple physical life, then in an intellectual, and then in a domestic, and later in the civic and national relation reaches its climax and finds its consumma-

tion in a realised relation to God. But this final relationship has within itself unlimited potencies of development; new possibilities, surprises, discoveries, intimacies, open before it; curtains behind curtains are drawn aside; just as in the development of the more noble human relationships.

The organ of man's responsiveness to God in this new life is prayer. It is by the steep ascent of prayer that the spirit rises to its natural atmosphere. Prayer is to the life of the soul what wings are to a bird, or sails to a ship. By it the relationship to God is realised, maintained, and developed; and the *laws of the soul's life and health are gradually perceived to be the laws of sacrifice, faith, cross-bearing, love and humility, as we find them in the life of Christ. It is by living in accordance with these fundamental laws of its own being, that the soul gradually attains to a full, rounded and personal life. It is then

that the structure of human nature is *Teleios* or *Katērtismenos*. It has an apparatus for detecting the realities as well as the appearances of life; it is not blind and need not fall into the pit (Luke vi., 39, 40); it is liberated from the bondage of material things (Matthew xix., 21); man has attained to the measure of the fulness of his stature (Ephesians iv., 13.

It is after this new relationship has been established in a life, that the secondary meaning of "perfection" becomes apparent. When a new level of experience is reached, there is almost always a corresponding change in the experiencing character. Perhaps the most obvious illustration is the change wrought when a man comes into the relationship established by love between man and wife. The new relationship works back, as it were, into the roots of his personal life, and modifies the whole character. It is even more fundamentally so in the relationship established by fellowship with God in

Christ. It begins by being an addition to, or fulfilment of, life; it ends by becoming a transformation of character. It is this secondary result which is often taken for the whole in speaking—as William Law did—of "Christian perfection." He makes it cover the whole of the ideal Christian character conceived as a conformity to a type legally determined, and the effect is that of a statue rather than a man. But the word, in the Scriptural sense, does not refer primarily to character, but to the relation out of which character grows. It is only when that relation has been perfected by a lifelong fellowship between the soul and God, that we may expect to see its full effects in character.

It is one of the charms of Madame Guyon's writings that, in spite of the environment of Romish superstition, and the influence of a crude theology, she realises in its simplicity the directness and immediacy of the soul's relation to God in Christ. There are passages in her writings which

might almost be grouped together as the "love letters of a saintly woman." She could have kept a diary of her deepening discoveries in the hidden things of God's love, of His fresh disclosures to her of His will and character, and of the change wrought in her own life and character by the experience she gained. To do this perfectly requires the perfect correspondence of a divine humanity. To do it at all, even imperfectly, is the highest attainment given to human nature as we know it.

Mr. Walter Bagehot, though no theologian, was a keen and accurate observer of human nature. His testimony to the value of such verdicts of the religious consciousness when highly sensitive and developed, is worth quoting. "The highest part of human belief is based upon certain developable instincts. Not the most important but the most obvious of these is the instinct of beauty, . . . The characteristic peculiarity of this instinct is not that it is

irresistible but that it is developable. The higher students of the subject, the more cultivated, who meditate upon it, acquire a new sense which conveys the truth to them, though others are ignorant of it, and though they themselves cannot impart it to those others. The appeal is not to the many, as with the axioms of Euclid, but to those few—the exceptional few—at whom the many scoff. The case is similar with the yet higher instincts of morality and religion. It is idle to pretend that much of them can be found among bloody savages, or simple and remote islanders, or a degraded populace. It is still idler to fancy that because they cannot be discovered there full-blown and complete and paramount, there is no evidence for them, and no basis for relying upon them. They resemble the instinct of beauty precisely. The evidence of the few—of the small, high-minded minority, who are the exception of ages and the salt of the earth—outweighs the

evidence of countless myriads who live as their fathers lived, think as they thought, die as they died; who would have lived and died in the very contrary impressions if by chance they had inherited these instead of others. The criterion of true beauty is with those—they are not many—who have a sense of true beauty; the criterion of true morality is with those who have a sense of true morality; the criterion of true religion is with those who have a sense of true religion."*

Nevertheless Mr. Bagehot does not attempt to make the expert in the spiritual life an autocrat in matters of religious opinion; rather, he suggests, in another place, that his experiences are to be regarded as scientific data, which are to be taken into consideration in forming the theologian's conclusions. "Each observer must bring his contingent to the list of data. Those data must be arranged and

* *Literary Studies*, vol. III, "The Ignorance of Man."

made use of; the certain and positive facts as to which everyone is agreed must have their due weight; they must be combined and compared with the various impressions as to which no two people exactly coincide. A rough summary must be made of the whole. In no other way is it possible to arrive at the truth of the matter. Without discussion each mind is dependent on its own partial observation."*

Regarded in this light, it can hardly be doubted by any sympathetic reader that Madame Guyon has added her contingent to the data which are to be considered and compared, in forming a conception of the ideals and possibilities of the Christian character.

* *Literary Studies*, vol. III, 217. "*The Metaphysical Basis of Toleration.*"

THE HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS.

As I understand Christianity it is a life . . . a higher and supernatural life, mystical in its roots and practical in its fruits, a communion with God, a calm and deep enthusiasm, a love which radiates, a force which acts, a happiness which overflows,—Amiel's Journal. Mrs. Humphrey Ward's Edition, p. 121.

"Consciousness which is the man himself."—Vinet, *Outlines of Theology*, p. 132.

THE distinction which Madame Guyon draws between acts done in the spirit, or "by grace," and actions of "the creature which are but human,"*

* e.g. *p.* 99.

is one against which many protests have been made in the name of common-sense. Dr. Jowett in particular used to maintain with apparently unimpeachable logic that a good act is a good act whatever motive lies behind it. "We must not shrink from saying that 'when men of the world do by nature whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, these not being conscious of the grace of God, do by nature what can only be done by His grace.' . . . Their moral worth may be more acceptable to God than our Christian feeling."* This sounds so plausible that it is worth while to recall the grounds on which the older distinction really rests.

The value of a life, and the status of character, cannot in any estimate, here or elsewhere, be determined by isolated acts, but by habits and the habitual motives

* *S. Paul's Epistles. Essay on Natural Religion*, p. 242.

from which actions come. The real object of judgment is not this or that action, but the habit formed of responding to higher or lower instincts, ideals, motives, sentiments, relationships—in other words the level of consciousness on which the man has chosen to live.

There is, of course, room for infinite differences between the mental habits of those who live on what theologians call the level of "nature." Many men on this plane choose to live by motives and ideals so high and true, that they deserve all the honour and respect which men can give them for their achievement of character. This is not because they have exhibited the supreme qualities of which human nature is capable, but because they have, as the saying goes, done "the best according to their lights,"—they have worked out the highest character which the facts and motives recognised in their consciousness seemed capable of producing.

But in dealing with the Christian life

in any of its characteristic forms, it is evident that a new fact has entered into consciousness which has in it the capacity to produce illimitable effects in character. A Christian man is not only a man with the capacities of natural manhood, he has also realised what manhood in its idea contains as a promise and hope, he is consciously a son in fellowship with God, a "joint heir with Christ" of all the grace, beauty, and power which may be "hid with Christ in God." He is in tune with the Infinite; and has a relation to the life that is both All and in All, of such a kind that more and more of that life must pass into his own. "He is alive in the Spirit" and has shaken himself free from the dominion—not the influence—of the flesh. His performance may for the time be poor and disappointing; but if he keeps true to the consciousness which has been awakened, and it is developed as it should be by faith and effort, and by drawing

on the grace of the Eternal Spirit, the conduct which will issue from that consciousness will at last be saintly as well as human; that is, there will be in it something of the supernatural or divine, if we choose to use those words, meaning by them that motives and ideals have entered into consciousness which men living on the level of nature refuse to recognise as in any way binding on them.

No man, desiring simply to be an honourable man, sees any obligation to live a *Christly* life, in the sense of substituting the fulfilment of God's will and a spiritual nature, for the fulfilment of his own will and his physical nature, that God's will may voluntarily take the place of his own; or to offer his life as a sacrificial witness to the love and authority of the Unseen.

It is only when the consciousness of sonship to God, which made all these natural to Christ, has been in some sense

reproduced by faith and grace in men, that acts of this kind come within the range of duty. The history of foreign missions in the last century is full of illustrations of what is meant by the operation of the Christian Consciousness in this respect.

Many will question whether it is really a higher stage of consciousness to be always conscious of the Fatherhood of the Eternal Spirit, always moving in the realm of the realm of the spiritual and ideal, living in the Presence of the Unseen, "enduring as seeing Him Who is invisible." On that point there is no appeal from consciousness itself. The verdicts of the religious consciousness are for those who receive them, the most authoritative in life. They are not to be reconsidered by the balancing of consequences, and the perceptions of non-Christianised intelligence. The verdicts of a Supreme Court are not sent for revision to Quarter Sessions. In the verdicts of the Christian Consciousness,

instincts and impulses are unified in which the whole man speaks. Love to God is, when once established, felt to be as much the natural act of our whole nature as the love of man to woman, or woman to man. It is self-justified. It can command the obedience of the will, the justifications which intelligence and logic can supply, and the full assent of conscience.

The phenomena of saintliness were, in the judgment of Mr. Cotter Morison, the facts which had saved the churches from neglect and disdain. But he maintains that the true Christian saint is the rarest product in every Christian Church. That is essentially the criticism of an outsider. The fact as seen from the inside would rather be stated in another way: Wherever the Christian consciousness is found substantially, some of the qualities of saintliness go with it; but it is hard to maintain that consciousness in a society which habitually lives on lower levels; so that, while saintliness is extremely common at

intervals in every genuine Christian life, and in all churches, it is almost always alloyed by a good deal which comes not from the Christian consciousness at all, but from the environment in which the Christian lives. It is extremely common to find men in whom the two levels co-exist; who at one time, realizing intensely the higher relations, are capable of the finest Christian feeling and action, and who at other times refuse to recognize any motives higher than those of the society in which they move. The problem of the Christian life, after the awakening of the higher consciousness, is so to maintain it and make it dominant and supreme, that the whole stream of conduct may issue thence, and be consistent with the source whence it springs.

NOTES FROM THE SHORT
APOLOGY FOR THE METHOD
OF PRAYER, BY MADAME
GUYON.

THE INWARD SILENCE.

IT has been thought that, in speaking of the "Inward Silence," we wished to suppress all good thoughts and all the expressions of the heart. The thoughts of the mind which come from the purified affections of a heart which loves its God, are very right. It is not those which must be suppressed, but those which the creature forms often more to satisfy his mind than to inflame his heart. The heart must move towards God and stretch out after Him through its affections; but when by reason of this

same affection an infusion of grace enters into the heart, it is necessary that this same heart which opened as a mouth to speak, remain open, silently waiting to receive divine nourishment. We must learn then to prepare the heart; and when it is prepared [as said the Prophet King, "my heart is prepared"] and God, having seen the preparation of the heart, is pleased to communicate Himself to it by a love infused, then we must silently yield to Him with respectful humility. It is to this end that all practices of this little book point.*

THE PASSIVE STATE.

When we speak of the "Passive State," we never mean by that a state such as

* *c.f. Amiel's Journal, p. 113, Mrs. Ward's Edition. "A capacity for self-recollection—for withdrawal from the outward to the inward is in fact the condition of all noble and useful activity."*

that of an inanimate object, with which one can do what one likes without the aid of its submission. It is not so with man, who performs actions much more noble, exalted, and also more conformed to the divine will; since it is veritably [conformity to] the will of God which gives the value and worth to an action. Now the action which makes us submit freely and voluntarily to the divine motion, and which causes us to let ourselves act as we are moved by God (although we could act by our own will), is without doubt a most meritorious act, being perfect obedience to God. I thought I had fully explained this in chapter XXI., on "Acts," so that there should be no difficulty. I showed further in chapter XXII., speaking of the Inward Silence, that it was not caused by the poverty, but by the abounding power of the work of God within, stronger than our own, which while making us silent about everything else, teaches us the language of the Divine One.

It is not then a silence caused by a vague inaction, and conjured up by the imagination, but an obedience rendered to the divine will. For if, according to the Scripture, "to obey God is better than the sacrifice of lambs," it is easy to conclude that this submission practised in the silence within, when God forms the purpose in us, is a very good work.

THE WORD PROPRIÉTÉ.

"The second difficulty is about what I wrote concerning Union with God, supposing Union with God to be possible, beginning with this life. It is a truth which is written of by many of the the Saints, and of which Christ Himself has assured us, asking this Union for us. What some people thought I meant was that the essential or immediate Union could not take place without loss of *propriété* (in the sense of personal possession),

"What I have always termed "*propriété*" refers to things of the spirit; and what I have called concupiscence, to things of the flesh. *Propriété*, according to my understanding of it, is concupiscence of the spirit, which in appropriating to itself what belongs only to God, corrupts what there is of good. It claims part in all that God does; it is the mother of the sins of the mind, the source of small acts of selfish dishonesty and of disguises within, by which man hides from himself the knowledge of what he is, and clothes himself with those things of which he has plundered God. I say that this *propriété* is entirely opposed to union with God, and that God destroys it before He honours the soul by Union with Himself."

Literary language is richer than in Madame Guyon's day by a word for this "concupiscence of spirit" or spiritual self-aggrandisement—the word Egotism; and this has accordingly been substituted for her word which was then, and is still,

liable to be misunderstood. It is a singular testimony to the genuineness of her experience, and the insight which it gave her, that she has made the prize of the religious life turn on a clear issue—the conflict between self-will and God's will. This is the Marathon of every personal religious history, the battle ground between freedom and tyranny; for there is no freedom except in the service of the Higher Will. It is also the Gethsemane of every disciple, where the cross, which "fills up that which is lacking in the sufferings of Christ," is taken up by each in turn who follows the Master. There is no surer test of the reality of a personal religion than clear perception on this point.

A very interesting parallel with Madame Guyon's experience of the stages by which prayer rises from petition to communion with God, may be found in a book which approaches the subject from the standpoint of scientific and scholarly criticism—Mr.

Percy Gardner's "*Exploratio Evangelica*." The book is a remarkable endeavour to cut away the foundations of Christianity as a religion of external authority, and reinstate it as a religion of experience. On its negative side it illustrates a school of criticism which has almost done its work; on its positive side it belongs to a movement which is only beginning—the recognition of the value of present and personal spiritual experience as a verification of the historic records of the Christian religion, a testimony to the objective validity of the unseen realities of faith, and the basis of the only true alliance between science and religion which is desirable, the application of scientific methods to religious facts. It is interesting to compare the place he gives to "prayer" with that assigned to it by Madame Guyon.

The following extract bears specially on Egotism and Prayer; but there are also many passages throughout the book in which he indicates that prayer is to him

the nerve and centre of the religious life, the sphere in which the supreme religious facts are personally verified, and the chief means by which the "Divine Ideas," as he calls them, obtain entrance into the human soul:—

"Prayer being once established as an institution becomes with time the vehicle in which works, from age to age, the divine idea of the surrender of the will of man to the will of God. At first sight it seems very ill-adapted for such a purpose. It seems adapted rather to be the instrument of the self-assertion of the will of the individual, bending to its own purposes the powers even of the spiritual world. And no doubt strong egotistic purpose is in many lands the mark of prayer, and survives in more civilised countries among those addicted to sorcery and witchcraft, who think that repeated prayers confer on those who offer them not only a degree of

absolute merit, but also actual power over the spirits, to bend them to human will. Unless the Power which works for righteousness were real and living, this tendency would be the natural and inevitable result of the custom of praying. But this tendency in the course of history comes into collision with a force far stronger than itself. Men come into the presence of the powers of the unseen world in simple egotism; but they are subdued and converted; and they learn that there is a higher good than that after which they were striving, and a purpose in their lives beyond the mere desire of self-gratification.

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"With the continued practice of prayer, the egotism which demands good for one's self, and the natural affection which demands gratification for one's relations and friends, though they do not die away, pass more or

less into the background. Man learns that the higher the tone of his request, the more sure it is to be granted; and thus there slowly dawns upon him the perception of a divine will which wills what is best. He learns to pray rather for delivery from *fear* of his enemies than for delivery out of the *hand* of his enemies; from the fear of death rather than from dying. He seeks inner changes rather than mere outward interpositions. And as this conception becomes more and more concrete and objective, man perceives more and more that his highest wisdom and happiness is to conform his own will to that which is divine. Then prayers become less a series of petitions than a communion with the unseen. Instead of trying to gain what he wishes, man learns to try to conform his wishes to the will of God, revealed to him day by day and felt by him to embody the ideal life."

This is true to the characteristic Christian experience in prayer, though it is not a complete account of the facts. Prayer destroys egotism in the Christian experience because God is found in Christ, and all fellowship with God effects a gradual transmutation of the egotistic into the filial personality. It is in prayer that the soul first attains to consciousness of its true self; first as individual, then as part of a great whole, a drop in the sea of Being, an iota in an august Name, a child in

"the blameless family of God."

